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COLVIN FIRES BACK ON DETAINEE ABUSE, PG7

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Celebrity Buzz

Abdul having Idol regrets
pg 44

Holiday Guide

Need help with that list?
pgs 23-34

Toques off as official Games mitts reach 1M mark

OLYMPICS

It's official, with more than one million pairs of Vancouver 2010 Red Mittens sold, Canada's Olympic Team apparel is a hit.

In addition to the success of the $10 handwarmers, more than 500,000 official Olympic hoodies, toques and scarves have been sold.

"With only 58 days to go … already one in 34 Canadians owns a pair of Vancouver 2010 Red Mittens," said Dennis Kim, VANOC's director of licencing and merchandising. "That's a staggering statistic given that we expected sales to peak in January and February."

METRO VANCOUVER

News on the Move

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Urban Foodie pg 43

Area's Top 20 tastes for '09

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Orphan Kitten Rescue **Endangered**

SEAN KOLENKO/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Karen Duncan, co-founder of Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue, with her newest rescue, Toby. The charity is in danger of closing its doors as it owes $35,000 in vet bills. Story, page 4.

City rounds up for MMA debate

Staff report recommends fighting events be allowed

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

It's Round 2 for Vancouver's ultimate fighting debate today as council again grapples with whether to allow professional mixed martial arts (MMA) events in the city.

A report by city staff, that was posted online yesterday, recommends the sanctioning of professional MMA events.

"I'm looking forward to seeing my first (professional MMA) event here in Vancouver," said NPA Coun. Suzanne Anton.

She believes the staff recommendations will pass and that MMA events — which have been barred in Vancouver since 2007 — will be again allowed.

Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) bigwigs Mike Mersch and Lawrence Epstein are among those who are expected to address council on the topic.

Anton said she expects there will be some opposition — based largely on earlier (and bloodier) iterations of the sport.

"When there is a greater understanding that the sport itself has evolved into a truer athletic event, I'm hoping people will move off that position," Anton said. "It is an event like many others that come to the city."

Vancouver placed a moratorium on professional MMA events in 2007 and appeared to choke out the sport this spring when council again voted against allowing sanctioned fights.

Instead, the city decided to lobby the province to create a regulatory body to govern the sport in B.C. However, they left the cage door open by requesting a staff report on the legality and benefits of sanctioning MMA fights.

Andy Suitela, who trains MMA fighters and owns Surrey's Suitela Fight Club, said the sport has become hugely popular and mainstream. Major events — like the UFC 97 in Montreal earlier this year — pump millions into the local economy.

Vision Vancouver Coun. Kerry Jang (along with Anton and Coun. Heather Deal) attended an amateur MMA fight at the Edgewater Casino at the end of November.

He said he doesn't make any judgments on what sports people like or dislike, but said as councillor he has the responsibility to make sure the city is protected legally and that the fights are as safe as possible.

Currently banned

GETTY IMAGES

Georges St. Pierre

- UFC president Dana White told fans this summer that his company planned to hold an MMA event in Vancouver in June 2010, despite the current ban on the sport.
- On Monday, Canadian MMA fighter Georges St. Pierre was voted Sportsnet's Canadian athlete of the year for the second year in a row. St. Pierre beat hockey superstar Sidney Crosby in fan Internet voting.

UN gang founder gets 30 years

A man who parlayed a group of rough friends, a disdain for the Hells Angels and what prosecutors describe as "laudable organizational skills" into one of B.C.'s most notorious gangs has been sentenced to 30 years in prison by a Seattle judge.

Coquitlam resident Clay Roueche, founder of the United Nations gang, so called because of its multi-ethnic character, pleaded guilty to drug and money laundering conspiracy charges last spring.

"I am absolutely certain that Mr. Roueche feared no one, took orders from no one and was the person making the decisions," U.S. District Judge Robert Lasnik said.

Roueche, who long avoided the U.S. because he suspected he was wanted there, was arrested last year after he tried to attend a wedding in Mexico.

Mexican authorities wouldn't let him enter the country, and at the request of the Americans, they put him on a flight home that landed first in Dallas.

Prosecutors say he used a network of helicopters, planes, semi-trucks and other methods to move many tons of marijuana and cocaine and millions of dollars through Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. The UN has been blamed for a number of targeted killings, though Roueche was not charged with any acts of violence.

Roueche, 34, founded the gang in the Fraser River Valley in the late 1990s, and the moniker was in part a jab at the exclusion of minorities by the Hells Angels, with whom the group sometimes sparred. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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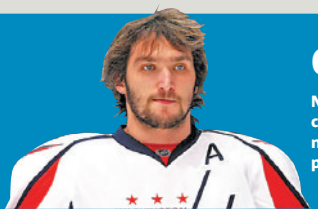

Ovie signing autographs for shoppers

NHL superstar Alex Ovechkin, left, will be at the Bay's flagship store in downtown Vancouver today to sign autographs, but only for the first 400 hockey fans to purchase a Signature Series item at the Olympic Superstore. The Washington Capitals and Team Russia player will be at the store between 5 and 7 tonight. METRO VANCOUVER

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2009 Festival of Media Awards

News in brief

BREAK-IN Delta residents may want to install bolt locks on their front doors after a thief broke into a vehicle parked overnight on Hunter Road and made off with locksmith tools and key-making equipment worth about $2,800.

THEFT A thief in North Vancouver essentially robbed the homeless after ripping off a Salvation Army kettle outside London Drugs on Lonsdale Avenue, news1130.com reports. The thief made off with about $200 worth of cash.

DRUGS One woman and two men have been arrested in connection with the bust of a clandestine drug lab in North Surrey. Hazmat crews worked throughout the day yesterday to dismantle the operation.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Blogs Just in time for your holiday shindigs, Backbeat counts down his Top 10 drinking anthems

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Extra: 7, 12, 33, 58
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Infant in critical condition

RCMP investigating possible case of shaken baby syndrome

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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A baby girl is in critical condition in a Richmond hospital with symptoms consistent with shaken baby syndrome after staff at her daycare put her down for a nap and couldn't wake her up again.

The one-year-old attends the Strong Start early learning centre at Mitchell Elementary School on Cambie Road, RCMP Cpl. Jennifer Pound said yesterday.

"The baby was in the care of another caregiver who brought her to the Strong Start centre (on Tuesday)," Pound said.

"(She) appeared fine and just after lunch (went) down for a nap. When the staff and caregiver attempted to wake her after a short time, she would not wake up."

The baby was taken to hospital, where doctors determined her symptoms were consistent with shaken baby syndrome — a diagnosis that has not been confirmed.

"Richmond RCMP would like to reassure the public that there is no immediate danger to other children attending Mitchell Elementary School or the Strong Start early learning centre," said Pound.

"At this point, there is no suspect in custody. However, the investigation is in the very early stages and many people have and will be interviewed."

Strong Start was closed for the day yesterday.

m.metronews.ca

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Greater Vancouver Zoo invites public to name young giraffe

CONTEST A contest is being held to name the baby giraffe at the Greater Vancouver Zoo.

The baby Rothschild's giraffe was born Oct. 18 and, according to zoo officials, she's bonding well with her brother Amryn.

The older sibling has been seen reaching over the fence, touching smelling and licking her.

Details

- People can submit a name in person at the zoo or via email to nametheba-by@gvzoo.com

The unnamed baby currently spends most of her days in a heated indoor enclosure and is starting to eat solid foods that the rest of her family enjoys, such as grain, bamboo and blackberry leaves.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREATER VANCOUVER ZOO

Senior giraffe keeper Bonnie Trusler feeds the new baby giraffe at the Greater Vancouver Zoo.

The winner of the naming contest will receive a one-year family membership to the zoo, as well as a "behind-the-scenes encounter" with the baby giraffe. The runner-up will receive a one-year family membership.

The contest closes Jan. 15 and the winner will be announced Jan. 18 when the baby turns three months old.

METRO VANCOUVER

Branson, city uniting for green cause

ENVIRONMENT Four-and-a-half years after Canada's only Virgin Megastore closed its shutters, Vancouver has once again coupled with dashing English knight Sir Richard Branson.

Mayor Gregor Robertson, who is attending the UN climate talks in Copenhagen, announced yesterday that the city is partnering with Branson's Carbon War Room to promote a green-cities initiative.

Richard Branson

Branson's organization looks to entrepreneurs for market-driven solutions to climate change.

The initiative, details of which will be announced during the coming weeks, will be launched during the 2010 Games.

Robertson said it involved inviting a handful of cities and businesses to build a green economy.

In a statement, Branson, the founder of Virgin Group, said he was impressed by the city's recent Vancouver Green Capital initiative.

"I am looking forward to working with (Robertson) and the City of Vancouver during the Olympics to learn more and find ways to get new support for their ambitious goals," Branson said.

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

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Go for a skate with an Olympic triathlete

Olympic triathlete Simon Whitfield will be at Centennial Arena in White Rock on Dec. 30 to skate around with fans and sign autographs. It'll cost $2.50 to skate with triathlon's first male Olympic champion. He'll be at the rink between 1:30 and 3:30 in the afternoon. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Four low-barrier shelters to open this winter

JEFF HODSON
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Vancouver will open four additional low-barrier homeless shelters in the city this winter.

Council also plans to implement a number of measures to curtail behaviour — like public defecation, drug use and sex — that marred a pair of shelters under the Granville Bridge, forcing their closure this spring.

Among the measures will be the ability for neighbours to contact the shelter about issues 24 hours a day and a reservation system so that homeless people don't have to line up in the cold.

"We're being responsive to communities," said Coun. Kerry Jang.

> **"We're being responsive to communities."**
> Coun. Kerry Jang

On Tuesday, the city approved $500,000 for what the city is calling Winter Response 2010. It will be used along with $1.2 million in provincial funding to open the four 40-person shelters that will operate until April 30.

The facilities, which provide storage areas and have strict no alcohol or drug policies, will likely be located in Grandview-Woodlands, Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant and in the Downtown.

For the Downtown site, Housing Minister Rich Coleman has said that either of the two shelters under the Granville Street Bridge could be reopened.

The city, Jang added, is also looking at creating "warming centres" at churches or neighbourhood houses as a place for homeless people to go during the day.

Council also approved $500,000 on Tuesday for improvements to the Bosman Motor Hotel, which will be used in a Mental Health Commission of Canada study that will provide housing and mental health treatment for 100 street homeless.

Kitten rescue threatened with shutdown

SEAN KOLENKO
for Metro Vancouver

After nearly a decade in the kitten-saving business Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue (VOKRA) may be forced to close its doors after amassing more than $35,000 in veterinary bills.

"We're going to be forced to shut down," said Maria Soroski, co-founder of VOKRA. "Donations have been down all year."

Founded in early 2001, VOKRA has placed thousands of abandoned and orphaned kittens into foster homes throughout the Lower Mainland.

This year alone the group has rescued more than 1,000 felines. The group also helps spay and neuter the kittens of 50 to 60 low-income families every year.

"We do it because there are just so many cats out there it just breaks our heart," she said.

The charity also relied for the last three years on money willed to them that has recently run out.

While Soroski admits a sluggish economy has also been a factor in their troubles, two large, unanticipated rescues earlier this year hit their group hard.

Karen Duncan, co-founder of VOKRA with Soroski, admits the group may have over-extended themselves this past year.

"We expanded into Surrey from just Vancouver and Burnaby," said Duncan. "Surrey is a very big problem and I realize now I just can't take on that city by myself."

Go online

- Visit www.orphankitten-rescue.com for more info and to make a donation.

FERNANDO CARNEIRO/METRO VANCOUVER

Condo buildings form a ring around George Wainborn Park downtown. According to a new report the availability of rental units in Vancouver has gone up to 2.8 per cent after historic lows.

Rental homes in city more available: Report

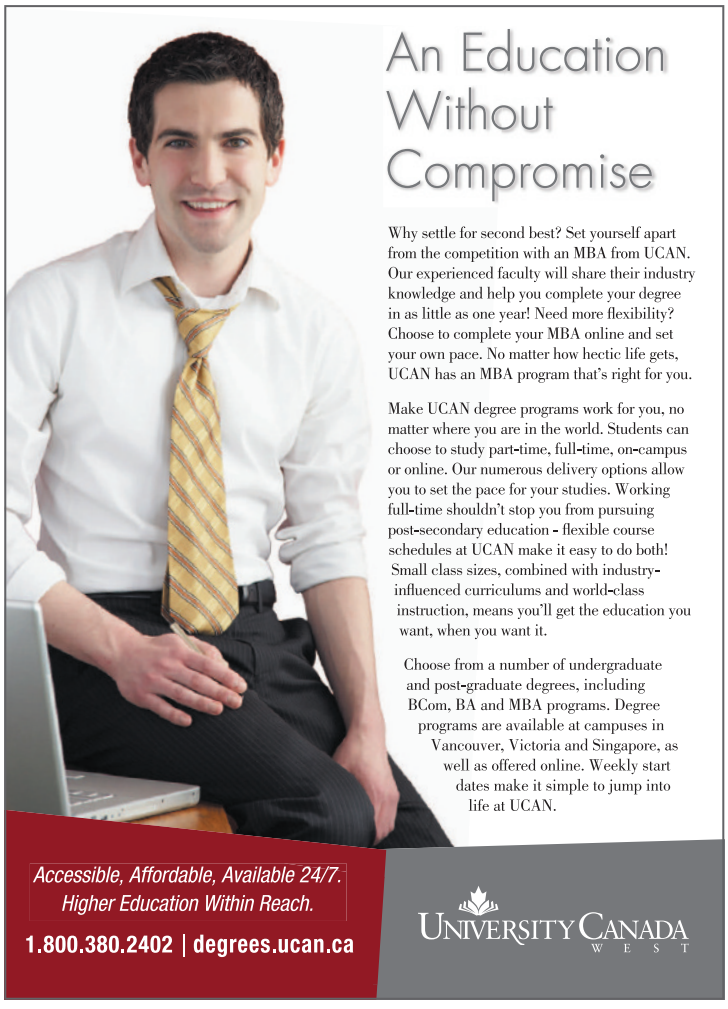
HOUSING Vancouver renters had an easier time finding accommodation this fall, according to a report from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), but while availability is up, affordability is down.

Rental vacancy rates in Vancouver rose to 2.8 per cent in October 2009 — an increase of 1.8 per cent over the same period last year — after sitting below one per cent since January.

Vancouver remained the most expensive rental city in the country with the average two-bedroom apartment costing $1,169 — that's a 2.9 per cent increase from 2008.

Robyn Adamache, senior market analyst for CMHC, sees the rise in availability in rental properties as a sign of tough economic times. Adamache also said she anticipates that 2010 will follow these same market trends.

SEAN KOLENKO/
FOR METRO VANCOUVER



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Take a night off adulthood

Telus World Of Science is inviting Vancouver grownups to take a night off adulthood at its next Science World After Dark event, which features performances by comedians. The adults-only evening takes place Jan. 15 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and includes access to all the galleries and a cash bar. METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

TRANSIT TransLink is providing free service on Christmas Eve starting at 5 p.m., as one of several transit service modifications over the holidays. Most buses and train lines will run on the holiday schedules on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. West Coast Express won't run on Dec. 28 or Jan. 1.

TEETH About 72 dentists and dental assistants are volunteering at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Their services are needed because of the nature of high impact winter sports and to treat things like tooth sensitivity, decay or even perform a root canal.

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Female ski jumpers object to Rogge's logic

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee, has again caught the ire of female ski jumpers after he "disparagingly" compared them to their male counterparts at a press conference, the women say.

Thirteen female jumpers from five countries sent a letter to Rogge, saying the IOC's logic to bar them from 2010 — because there are only 164 competitive female jumpers compared to 2,500 male jumpers — is unfair.

At a press conference in Switzerland last week, Rogge said women wouldn't be jumping in Vancouver because the IOC didn't want to "water down" the medals because of the small pool of female jumpers.

"There are approximately 164 ... women jumping around the world. More than 2,500 men are jumping. So you can see the difference," he said. But in their letter to Rogge, the female jumpers said he "neglected to mention that those male jumpers have participated in the Olympics since 1924," guaranteeing them funding, coaches, sponsors and a fan base.

"Women's ski jumping, as a sport, has never had the same level of support and as a consequence has not been able to develop at the same rate as men's ski jumping," the women said.

DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ski jumpers including Lindsey Van, left, and Jessica Jerome, right, listen as Deedee Corradini, president of Women's Ski Jumping USA (not pictured), speaks to reporters outside the B.C. Court of Appeal in Vancouver on Nov. 12.

By the numbers

- In 2006, when the IOC decided not to allow women to jump in 2010, there were 83 women from 14 countries competing at the elite level.
- When snowboard cross and ski cross made their debut in the 2006 Games, there were roughly 30 women from 10 countries competing in the sports.

B.C. agency makes discovery in cancer fight

CELLS Researchers at the B.C. Cancer Agency have made a new discovery in cell division that could offer insight into how cancer divides and grows, and how best to treat it.

The scientists have found that when a cell divides to create an identical copy — or a daughter cell — the identical copies of chromosomes are not always randomly distributed to the daughter cell, said Dr. Ester Falconer, a post-doctorate fellow at the Agency and lead author of the study.

"Because those copies are identical, it was always thought it didn't matter which copy went to which cell," Falconer said. "But we learned that's not always true, and in some cells it's not a random process."

Researchers propose that this mechanism could have a role in determining the fate of cells in the abnormal growth of cancer cells. Dr. Peter Lansdorp, principal investigator, said the study provides important groundwork for future research.

"Future studies will use this approach, with the hope that researchers will develop a better understanding of how normal cells divide and how cancer starts and progresses at the cellular level," he said.

KRISTEN THOMPSON /METRO VANCOUVER

Olympian touch at Mickey D's

MCDONALD'S It may be the dead of winter, but Vancouverites can now get s'mores any time they like — providing they live near a McDonald's.

The fast-food chain and 2010 sponsor is re-decorating stores across Canada with Olympic-themed elements — like images of Canadian athletes — and adding items to the menu to reflect the international appeal of the Games.

Participating restaurants are selling s'mores pies and introducing a parmigiana chicken snack wrap on Dec. 29.

In the New Year, Happy Meals will include 2010 mascot toys and Chicken McNuggets will come with spicy Szechwan and zesty mango dipping sauces.

In addition to Olympic-themed elements, McDonald's locations are offering s'mores.

METRO VANCOUVER

Case in limbo after accuser dies

NORTH VANCOUVER A sexual assault case against a North Vancouver hockey coach may be in limbo following the death of the man's accuser. North Vancouver RCMP say foul play is not suspected in the death of the 28-year-old man who came forward in March, alleging he was assaulted by Dusan Benicky in the early 1990s. Benicky denies the charges, which include sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching and sexual assault. The matter is expected in court tomorrow, but B.C. Crown spokesman Neil MacKenzie says it is under review.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Court rules against Bell ad claim

Rogers Communications Inc. says a B.C. judge has ruled that Bell Mobility's claim it has Canada's most reliable network is false and misleading, and has called for immediate removal of all advertising containing the statement. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Arrest made in cold case

Police in Kingston, Ont., have arrested a Winnipeg man in a decades-old murder case. Joseph Clifford Edward Langford, 66, has been charged with non-capital murder in the death of Kingston resident Marshall Augustus Matier, 64, whose body was found behind a building in 1970. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Colvin blasts Tories in letter to Commons

New allegations in Afghan torture debate

Canada stubbornly refused to monitor Afghan prisoners, some of whom disappeared into unofficial "black site" jails, until public attention left it no choice, diplomat Richard Colvin claims in a stinging letter filed with a House of Commons committee.

The 16-page, point-by-point critique of testimony and public claims by federal officials is laced with several new allegations sure to feed the political wildfire burning over the prison torture issue.

The intent of the letter, delivered yesterday to the special committee on Afghanistan, was to rebut critics who've tried to tear apart Colvin's claims of abuse in Afghan jails and what Canada knew about it.

On April 24, 2007 — one day after allegations of torture were published in Canada — the Canadian Embassy in Kabul recommended a system to monitor prisoners, Colvin wrote.

But the advice was rejected by the senior federal official in charge of the Afghan file, David Mulroney, who is now the ambassador to China.

"In our one-page memo, we suggested that Canada should negotiate a new detainee [memorandum of understanding], set up an effective monitoring mechanism, and try to reduce the number of detainees taken," says Colvin's letter.

"Mr. Mulroney replied within hours to reject our advice, instructing us instead to implement the contingency plan."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Response

- The public outcry over the torture allegations forced the Conservative government to sign a new, stricter deal with the Afghan government on May 3, 2007.

Ontario Survivor carries the flame

PETER REDMAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sixteen-year-old Jack Prins, a survivor of childhood cancer and spokesperson for the Sick Kids Foundation, runs the final 300 metres to light the cauldron as the Olympic torch relay arrives in Lindsay, Ont., yesterday.

Harper to join climate talks today

DENMARK Violent protests and deadlocked talks await Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Copenhagen as climate negotiations threaten to unravel in their final hours.

Harper will join 192 other world leaders today at the United Nations conference in an effort to seal some kind of a deal.

But with scant few hours until the summit's close, the chasm between countries rich and poor seemed wider than ever.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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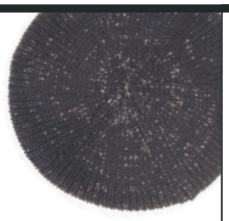
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Saskatchewan rig topples over, kills man

Saskatchewan occupational health and safety officials are investigating the death of an Estevan man who was killed when a service rig toppled over in a rural area near Kisbey, southeast of Regina. THE CANADIAN PRESS

87 cancer test errors found: Study

A new study says nearly 40 Quebec women with breast cancer have received improper treatment since last year because of testing irregularities — and five of them died.

The provincial study arrived yesterday as a follow-up to a report that cited problems with Quebec's screening practices.

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> Yves Bolduc, Quebec health minister

Quebec Health Minister Yves Bolduc ordered the review in June.

He asked for thousands of cancer tests to be redone after an extensive study suggested there were problems with Quebec's screening process.

The original study by Dr. Louis Gaboury, head of the Quebec Association of Pathologists, examined almost 3,000 breast cancer tests conducted over 14 months, starting in April 2008. Out of 2,856 exams reviewed, 87 errors were found in the test results.

The new provincial study, released yesterday, confirms 39 cancer sufferers failed to receive the proper care. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Views of Olympic families sought

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

STORIES Hundreds of mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters will be in Vancouver cheering on Canada's Olympians at the 2010 Winter Games.

Petro-Canada is looking for a couple of families to tell their stories.

Through Petro-Canada's Family Correspondent contest, two individuals, along with a family member each, will be chosen to go to Vancouver and chronicle the activities of athletes' families via Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

"They'll get back the word of what the families were doing, the relationships they had with their athlete, what their adventures were there," said former Canadian figure skating star Kurt Browning. "It's a really fun project and bird's eye view of what's happening at the Olympics."

Contestants must submit a 30-second video to facebook.com/dreambig. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tories have six-point lead: Poll

POLITICS A new poll suggests Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives are maintaining a six-point lead over the Liberals, despite facing daily fire over their handling of the Afghanistan detainee issue.

The survey by The Canadian Press and Harris-Decima indicates support for the Tories stands at 34 per cent nationally, compared with 28 per cent for the Liberals, 14 for the NDP and 13 for the Greens. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

KHADR Canadian Omar Khadr will be among roughly 100 Guantanamo Bay detainees whom U.S. officials say will be transferred to a prison in rural Illinois, but his lawyers say they aren't celebrating. Khadr, 23, was to be told the news yesterday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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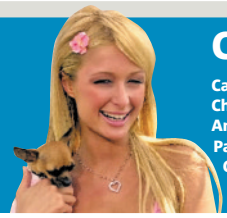
Female players won't be charged with assaulting male cheerleader

Prosecutors say they won't file criminal charges against two Missouri women's basketball players accused of beating up a male cheerleader. Leading scorers Amanda Hanneman and Jessra Johnson were arrested five days ago on suspicion of assault after the cheerleader said he was beaten up by the pair. Coach Cindy Stein suspended the players the following day. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



Chihuahua surplus blamed on celebs

California has more chihuahuas than it can handle, and it has Hollywood to blame. Chihuahuas make up 30 per cent or more of the dog populations at many California shelters. And experts say pop culture is to blame, with fans imitating chihuahua-toting celebrities like Paris Hilton and Miley Cyrus, then abandoning the dogs. The problem appears to be specific to California — shelters elsewhere would love to share the wealth, said Gail Buchwald, senior vice-president overseeing the ASPCA adoption centre in New York City. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

U.S. The estimated time when whites will no longer make up the majority of Americans has been pushed back eight years — to 2050 — because the recession and stricter immigration policies have slowed the flow of foreigners into the U.S. The United States has 308 million people today; two-thirds are non-Hispanic whites. The total population should climb to 399 million by 2050, under the new projections, with whites making up 49.9 per cent of the population.

BRITAIN London police say they have charged a pair of 10-year-old boys with raping an eight-year-old girl. Scotland Yard said yesterday that the alleged rape happened in west London two months ago, but officials declined to provide any other details of the case. Both boys are to be arraigned in court today.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Talks deadlocked, protests flare

Police fired pepper spray and beat protesters with batons outside the UN climate conference yesterday, as disputes inside left major issues unresolved just two days before world leaders hope to sign a historic agreement to fight global warming.

Hundreds of protesters were trying to disrupt the 193-country conference, the latest action in days of demonstrations to demand "climate justice" — firm steps to combat global warming. Police said 230 protesters were detained.

m.metronews.ca

Scan this barcode for a daily video report from Copenhagen, or watch it at metronews.ca/world

Go Green

Inside the convention hall, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez echoed the protesters' sentiments: "If the climate was a bank, a capitalist bank, they would have saved it."

Earlier, negotiators dealing with core issues debated until just before dawn without setting new goals for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions or for financing poorer countries' efforts to cope with coming climate change, key elements of any deal. In those overnight talks, the American delegation apparently objected to a proposed text it felt might bind the U.S. prematurely to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions before Congress acts. U.S. envoys insisted, for example, on replacing the word "shall" with the conditional "should."

The Copenhagen talks so far have been marked by sharp disagreements between China and the U.S., and between rich and poor nations. Still unresolved are the questions of emissions targets for industrial countries, billions of dollars a year in funding for poor countries to contend with global warming, and verifying the actions of emerging powers like China to ensure that promises are kept.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THIBAULT CAMUS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Danish riot police use pepper spray on protesters outside the UN climate conference in Copenhagen yesterday.

Dozens of needles found inside boy

BRAZIL A two-year-old boy has as many as 50 metal sewing needles inside his body and a doctor treating the boy said yesterday they were apparently stuck there one by one.

Dr. Luiz Cesar Soltoski told The Associated Press that surgeons hope to remove most of the needles — some as long as five centimetres — but because some are stuck in his lungs, they have to wait until the child's breathing improves.

Some cannot be removed; they are too close to vital organs or actually inside them, Soltoski said.

AGENCIA O GLOBO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An X-ray shows the needles inside the boy.

The boy's mother brought him to a hospital in the city of Ibotirama on Thursday, saying he was complaining of pain.

The mother told police she doesn't know how the needles got inside her son, but police have opened an investigation.

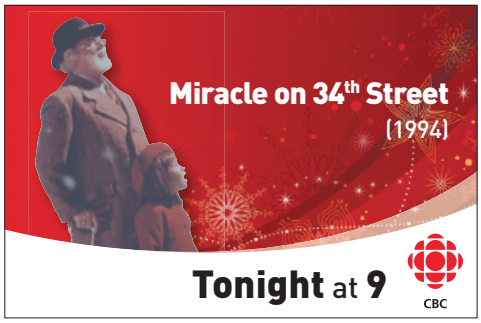
Soltoski said he believes the needles were stuck into his body one by one because it would have been impossible for him to swallow them.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iran fires most advanced missile

TEHRAN Iran yesterday test-fired an upgraded version of its most advanced missile, which is capable of hitting Israel and parts of Europe, in a new show of strength aimed at preventing any military strike against it amid the nuclear standoff with the West. The test was the latest version of Iran's longest-range missile, the Sajjil-2, with a range of about 2,000 kilometres.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Taliban to release video of hostage
The Taliban have announced they will release a new video of a captured U.S. soldier. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tiger and Elin headed for divorce?

Tiger Woods's wife is planning to divorce him after Christmas, a number of U.S. media outlets reported last night.

Photos this week show Elin Nordegren, 29, near the couple's home in Windermere, Fla., not wearing her wedding ring.

"She plans to leave Tiger," an unnamed source close to Nordegren told People magazine.

The media outlets all quoted unnamed sources, but they all pointed to the same thing: Divorce. ABC News also quoted a source as saying: "Divorce is 100 per cent on. She's not rushing to divorce, however.

"She wants all the dirty laundry to be out on the table before she signs anything." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Five-plus years

- Tiger Woods and Elin Nordegren married in 2004 and have two children, Sam, 2, and Charlie, 10 months.

2009 deadliest year yet for journalists

REPORT The November massacre of 30 media workers in the Philippines made 2009 the deadliest year yet for journalists, according to a report to be released today.

The Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent press advocacy group, says at least 68 journalists were killed in 2009, a 60 per cent increase over 2008, when 42 deaths were recorded.

Until the November massacre in the Philippine province of Maguindanao, where 57 people, including 30 journalists, were killed, 2009 seemed likely to end with 38 killings — a lower death toll than the year before. The previous one-year record was in 2007, with 67 killings.

Four journalists were also killed in Pakistan, making it the second-most deadly country. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment

Parties unravel mysteries

A co-worker recently told me that he wasn't sure if I was an introvert or an extrovert. I replied that I was still trying to figure it out.

We're all social chameleons. The way we act around our colleagues is very different from the way we act around our friends. Due to prescribed expectations, we don't generally have the opportunity to get to know our co-workers until we're outside the restrictive office environment.

Enter: The office Christmas party.

At a recent holiday shindig for a company I freelance for, a buzzed colleague and I bonded over our mutual infatuation for music from the 1960s. I met the sparkling, chatty fiancée of a quiet co-worker. And I gaped in awe as a respectable higher-up dropped to his knees during Boney M's Rasputin and proceeded to entertain us with some scarily proficient Russian dance moves.

What. In. The. Heck?

Who are these people that we spend so many of our waking hours in the presence of? We know their names, their positions and what they eat for lunch, but their personal lives, preferences and real personalities are, for the most part, a mystery. That is until it's time to party!

"At parties, some people believe that the normal rules that govern the identities they have negotiated with one another are relaxed," explains social psychology Prof. William B. Swann. "The boss who is ordinarily chilly with her subordinates may feel that she can warm up, or co-workers who are normally competitive with one another may be persuaded to ignore this and try to relax and enjoy one another. Alcohol can exaggerate these tendencies by lowering social inhibition and making people more open to experimenting with identities that they would not dream of assuming while sober."

But mistletoe and tumblers of extra-special eggnog among co-workers is potentially problematic.

"The downside of suspending the identity negotiation process for parties is that it can be difficult to revert back to the original identity," says Swann. "This will be particularly true if the party atmosphere encourages us to reveal something that could poison a relationship (e.g., hostility or inappropriate attraction)."

True, you may never look at Janice from accounts receivable in the same way ever again (cheap drunk, opera hobbyist), but anything that reveals the humanity of those around us probably isn't such a bad thing.

Sofi Papamarko is a 20-something writer based in Toronto. Her heroes include Desmond Morris and Nancy Sinatra.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Worth mentioning

Ancient climate study points to sea level rise

Global warming in this century might raise sea levels more than expected in future centuries, says a study that looked at what happened at a time when Neanderthals roamed Europe.

Unless global warming is curbed or expensive measures are taken to hold back rising water, the projected sea level rise could submerge about one-third of Florida, southern Manhattan, much of Bangladesh and almost all the Netherlands, for example, researchers said.

An expert praised the work but cautioned that such projections can't be made with precision.

Earth naturally alternates between ice ages and warmer times, due to changes in the tilt of the planet and its orbit around the sun. It is now in a warmer spell that began some 10,000 years ago. But scientists say man-made, heat-trapping gases are driving the warming beyond the natural amount.

Warmth can raise sea levels by expanding water volume and melting huge sheets of ice in Greenland and Antarctica. To get an idea of what future warming might do to sea levels, scientists at Princeton and Harvard universities looked at Earth's last warm period, which peaked some 125,000 years ago, sometimes called the Eemian stage. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Views

What is Barbie wearing under her burka?

Authenticity has never been Barbie the doll's strong suit. It's estimated that if she were lifesize, she would tip over because of the size of her breasts.

So I shouldn't be surprised that as part of the 500 international outfits designed to mark Barbie's 50th birthday — yes, she's that old but doesn't she look good for her age — "Muslim" Barbie is wearing a burka.

As a Muslim woman, I am sadly all too familiar with the media shorthand for "Muslim" and "woman," equalling Covered in Black Muslim Woman. This being Barbie though, the burka isn't in forbidding black. Italian designer Eliana Lorena, who made the outfits for an auction Sotheby's is holding to collect money for Save the Children, instead made Muslim Barbie's burka vermillion and lime green!

What will the Taliban say?

What on Earth are little girls supposed to do with Burka Barbie? More intriguingly, what is Barbie wearing under that lime green burka? I was at a loss until I came across an ad by German lingerie company Liaison Dangereuse.

A woman steps out of the shower into stilettos (because they're the first thing a woman wears after showering, of course). She stands nude at her mirror to apply makeup, followed by lingerie, on top of which she throws a burka (black, not lime green though). The clip ends with the tantalizing line "Sexiness for everyone. Everywhere."

That's more like the Barbie we've known for 50 years! So, are Burka Barbie and Liaison Dangereuse in some kind of marketing cahoots?

The final piece of the puzzle came when the BBC reported that on the Saudi religion channel Awtan TV women presenters are dressed from head to toe in a black niqab. (The burka has a mesh where the eyes are, the niqab leaves the eyes uncovered).

Eureka!

Those Burka Barbies must be spinoffs for those women presenters, one of whom told the BBC that wearing the niqab helps her to concentrate more on her work and what she looks like is irrelevant. It begs the question why she didn't choose radio instead, but, hey, I'm still trying to figure out this Burka Barbie business.

Apparently, fans of these women in black from head to toe — gloves included — urge them to stay just the way they are. Little did Ms. Lorena realize that she was actually supplying a demand most of us never knew existed — Burka Barbie TV Presenter!

I never was one for dolls.

Mona Eltahawy is an award-winning Egyptian-born commentator and public speaker on Arab and Muslim issues. She reported on the Middle East for 10 years before moving to the U.S.

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Playboy falls on NYSE over sale concerns

Playboy Enterprises Inc., owner of the namesake magazine, fell in New York Stock Exchange trading on concern that talks about a sale to Iconix Brand Group Inc. are collapsing. A sale of Playboy would mean an exit for founder and majority shareholder Hugh Hefner, 83. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

DOLLAR	GAS	OIL	TSX
US 94.30¢	US $5.48	US $72.66	11,637.04
US 0.08¢	US 3.7¢	US $1.97	96.02

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Wind Mobile blows into Canada

PHONE Wireless provider Wind Mobile launched its cellphone and data service yesterday, bringing a new player and more competition into the already hotly contested cellphone market.

Wind, owned by Yak long-distance provider Globalive, opened 18 outlets in the Toronto area, with plans to open more later this week in Calgary and in Vancouver, Ottawa and Edmonton in the new year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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ScanLife

Ireland is the latest country whose financial woes are provoking economic anxiety across the Eurozone. Scan this barcode for the full article.

Solar DIY **A bright idea**

GUS RUELAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Employees stock the first do-it-yourself home solar panel system by Andalay at a Lowe's hardware store in an L.A. suburb yesterday. The panels convert solar power into electricity that can be used to power a home. If the solar panels produce more electricity than what is needed to run a home, the excess can be sold to the local electric company.

Business in brief

STAYING HOME Travel by U.S. residents to Canada fell 2.6 per cent between September and October to 1.6 million trips, the first decline in travel by Americans to Canada in four months.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Don't get seduced, Carney cautions

BoC governor gives warning to avoid credit risks

Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney issued a caution to Canadians and the chartered banks yesterday: Interest rates are going up and they should take care not to get caught out.

Mark Carney

Expanding on previous warnings, the bank governor told a business audience in Toronto the current low interest rate environment may be luring Canadians to borrow too much, and banks to extend loans they will later regret.

Canadians have taken on more debt even during the recession, which is unusual, Carney said.

But while Canadians may be able to afford the added debt burden now, when interest rates are at historic lows, they may get caught short when rates return to more normal levels.

"The combination of sustained growth of household debt relative to income and a rising interest rate environment could increase the vulnerability of households to an adverse shock," he said in notes on the speech released by the central bank in Ottawa.

The bank governor did not say when he expects interest rates to start rising, although economists believe Carney will make his first move on his lower-bound 0.25 per cent policy rate in mid-2010.

That would be after the bank's conditional commitment to stand still on the rate until the end of June.

It is not the first time Carney and the central bank have voiced such concerns, most recently last Thursday in the central bank's semi-annual Financial Systems Review, which cited household debt as the number one risk factor to Canada's economic well-being.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Wizards letting fans design play?
Are things so bad for the Washington Wizards that they need coaching help from fans? ESPN.com is carrying a contest that asks readers to submit a diagram of an inbounds play the website says the "Wizards will try to use during a game." The deadline for submissions is Dec. 23. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports

Spezza out 6 to 8 weeks

Jason Spezza, left, will miss six to eight weeks with a torn ligament in his right knee, the Ottawa Senators said yesterday. An MRI Tuesday night revealed the damage to his medial collateral ligament. The forward suffered the injury during the third period of a 3-2 loss in Toronto Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Ducks snap Canucks' streak

NHL RESULTS

Anaheim 3 Vancouver 2

m.metronews.ca

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Saku Koivu's power-play goal at 15:48 of the third period gave the Anaheim Ducks a 3-2 victory over the Vancouver Canucks last night.

Koivu converted a goal-mouth pass from rookie Kyle Calder while Canucks defenceman Kevin Bieksa was serving a tripping penalty.

The Ducks (13-13-7) posted their third win in the past four games.

The Canucks (19-15-1) saw their win streak end at three games. They have yet to record four straight victories this season.

The Ducks outshot the Canucks 34-30, including 13-2 in the first period and 24-13 after 40 minutes.

Vancouver came alive in the third while trying to overcome a 2-1 deficit.

Bobby Ryan, in the first period, and Ryan Getzlaf, in the second, also scored for Anaheim

Henrik Sedin and Steve Bernier replied for the Canucks, who were blanked on five power play chances while the Ducks scored on one of four.

Daniel Sedin collected an assist to help the Sedin brothers extend their point streaks to eight games apiece.

Meanwhile, Canucks goalie Roberto Luongo stopped 31 shots in the loss.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Anaheim's Bobby Ryan, left, trips up Vancouver's Willie Mitchell, centre, as he tries to clear the puck from in front of goalie Roberto Luongo during last night's action.

NHL aims to add second outdoor game for Canada

HOCKEY NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has acknowledged that the league would like to create a second outdoor game to be held in Canada next season.

The NHL had looked at holding one at Calgary's McMahon Stadium this year, but couldn't make the timing work, according to the commissioner.

A game in the 2010-11 season would likely be played on CBC's Hockey Day in Canada. Bettman said all six Canadian teams have expressed interest in participating in it.

"In the course of conversations, I think every one of the Canadian clubs has said either, 'We want to host and be in it or at least be in it,'" Bettman said.

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Galaxy, Donovan sign contract

The Los Angeles Galaxy announced yesterday that the team has signed Landon Donovan to a new four-year contract. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian national junior team member Taylor Hall yawns as he waits for the team photo with Jordan Caron, left, and Braydon Schenn, right, in Regina yesterday.

Will Canada have enough offence?

World junior team has few proven scorers

With so much firepower missing, the first question about Canada's team is where the goals will come from at the world junior championship.

After Jordan Eberle of the Regina Pats, who scored six times in as many games at last year's world juniors, and the dynamic Taylor Hall of the Windsor Spitfires, the team looks strong on two-way character forwards and less so on offensive flash and dash.

But the potential for goals is there, and one of the team's best weapons, power-play point man Ryan Ellis, is not worried.

"Eberle's got close to a goal a game and (Adam) Henrique's close to that in our league (the Ontario Hockey League)," Ellis said yesterday after final cuts were made at the Canadian team selection camp. "Hallsie's close to that and a few guys from the Quebec league as well.

"I don't think it's an issue, or ever will be in Canada. Everyone seems to think it's a problem, but I guess we'll see what happens."

Concern arose before the camp when centre Cody Hodgson, who led the tournament last year in Ottawa with five goals and 11 assists, pulled out with a back injury.

The team was already without eight players still eligible for the under-20 tournament but who have graduated to the NHL — John Tavares, Evander Kane, Steven Stamkos, Matt Duchene, Ryan O'Reilly, Michael Del Zotto, James Wright and Tyler Myers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Ottawa 2 Buffalo 0
Phoenix 6 Toronto 3
Carolina 5 Dallas 3
Florida 4 Atlanta 3
New Jersey 2 Montreal 1
N.Y. Islanders 2 N.Y. Rangers 1
Chicago 3 St. Louis 0
Anaheim 3 VANCOUVER 2

TODAY'S GAMES

Minnesota at Montreal
N.Y. Rangers at N.Y. Islanders
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia
Dallas at Atlanta
Phoenix at Columbus
Tampa Bay at Detroit
Los Angeles at Calgary
Nashville at Edmonton
Anaheim at San Jose

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Orlando 118 Toronto 99
Atlanta 110 Memphis 97
Cleveland 108 Philadelphia 101
Dallas 100 Oklahoma City 86
Indiana 101 Charlotte 98
L.A. Clippers 120 Minnesota 95
L.A. Lakers 107 Milwaukee 106 (OT)
New Orleans 95 Detroit 87
Utah 108 New Jersey 92
Denver 111 Houston 101
Washington at Sacramento
San Antonio at Golden State

TODAY'S GAMES

Orlando at Miami
New York at Chicago
Phoenix at Portland

Bengals receiver 'battling for his life'

NFL Cincinnati Bengals receiver Chris Henry is "battling for his life" after falling out of the back of a pickup truck yesterday during what police described as a domestic dispute with his fiancée.

Chris Henry

Henry was found in the road in south Charlotte "apparently suffering life-threatening injuries," according to Charlotte-Mecklenburg police. Police spokesman Robert Fey said officers were stationed near the 26-year-old Henry's hospital room. He had no information on Henry's condition, but said he was alive. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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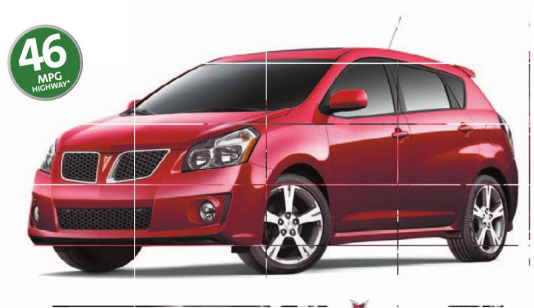

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HOLIDAY

Shopping Guide

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Sweet treats

From gifts for the music lover to suggestions for teens and tweens, our 12-page Holiday Shopping Guide brings you all the ideas you need.

Next week's lineup

GIFT GUIDES For suggestions on what to buy if you've put off your holiday shopping, pick up Metro's last-minute Holiday Shopping Guide on Dec. 24.

Tech Pg 24

The coolest gadgets for all on your list.

Beauty Pg 26

The year's best beauty products for her.

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Holiday Shopping Guide

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RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Sometimes gadgets go beyond simple necessity and actually inspire the imagination with their creativity, practicality or cleverness. After all, what is great technology if not the truest example of human ingenuity?

Here are some of this year's coolest gadgets:

Savant
starts at $6,100

Remember all that talk years ago about being able to control things like the stove and air conditioner in all parts of your home remotely? Well, it looks like that reality is finally more than hot air — be-

The uCorder wearable camcorder, below, is small enough to carry around with you.

hold the Savant, a unified console that can link to your wireless Apple device and lets you control all the important stuff in your home from one place, or even anywhere in the world. Yes, you can whip out your iPhone in Paris to turn down the heating in your empty Canadian condo. Pull up a picture of a particular room in your home and control things in that specific room like lights, security systems and even your stereo system remotely. It's not cheap, but for the people drooling over it, price will probably be no obstacle to getting this thing.

The Escort Entourage CIS powered by Blackline GPS is great for the true car lover.

The IlaDusk women's personal safety alarm is just $29.

uCorder wearable camcorder
$90-$120

Tiny and convenient, the uCorder is a nifty little video camera small enough to actually carry around with you so you'll be ready to tape your next lecture, whale sighting or hilarious karaoke moment instead of just wishing you had brought your large clunker along. Measuring 3.5-inches tall, 1-inch wide and 0.5-inch thick, it's definitely one of the smallest video cameras around. It easily fits into a shirt pocket or clips to a lanyard and can even be pinned to clothing for your next bungee jump. Records in standard AVI or audio-only WAV file formats and available with 1 or 2 GB of memory.

Escort Entourage CIS powered by Blackline GPS
$399.95 + $14.95 monthly subscription fee

For the true car lover (and worrier-abouter), the Escort Entourage CIS is a satellite-capable tracking device that lets you get a handle on where your car is at all times, track it remotely online or on your smartphone, and eventually send the authorities out to recover it. Tamper-sensing technology will alert you by email and text message if your car gets broken into or stolen, and you can then track its location in real time on Google Maps or Microsoft Earth. Pretty nifty for also keeping tabs on where your teenage son is actually taking the car when he says he's heading to the movies — and you can even tell how fast the car is being driven. Turn it on or off using your own wireless key.

For gals

IlaDusk women's personal safety alarm
$29

Named after the Sanskrit goddess of speech, this alarm emits a high-decibel, piercing female scream when activated that is loud enough to disorient an attacker and command the attention of anyone nearby, to help prevent a sexual assault. Unlike other alarms, this one is stylish and sleek when it attaches neatly to a keyring or clipped to the outside of a handbag, meaning women will be far more likely to have it at hand when needed — which can make all the difference.

For guys

Panasonic Pro-Curve 4-blade men's shaver
$399.99

For the guy who wants to pamper his face (and has the cash to do so), the Pro-Curve has four nano-technology shaped blades and can be used for wet or dry shaves with its wicked-fast 14,000 rpm motor. A built-in sonic vibration cleaning mode, pop-up trimmer, illuminated LCD screen, 45-minute continuous charge and ready for universal voltage (100-240V) no matter where you travel, despite the expense, it's hard to find a more capable and satisfying shaver.

The Panasonic Pro-Curve 4-blade men's shaver can be used for wet or dry shaves.

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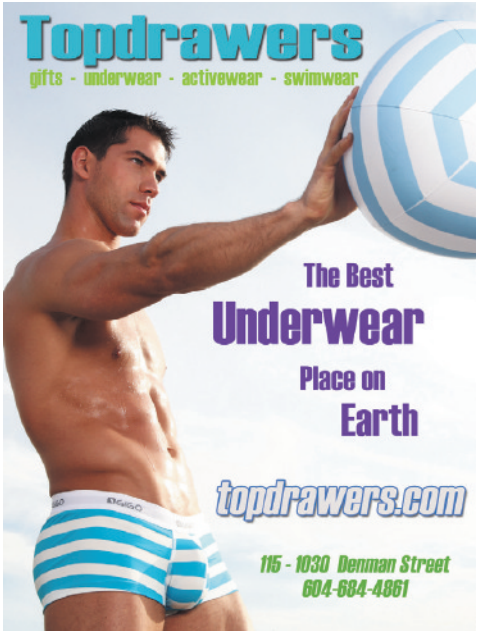
For the coffee lover
Starbucks Christmas Blend (a.k.a. Starbucks Holiday Blend) is available in 1 lb ($17.95) and 1/2 lb ($9.65) bags. Available at Starbucks locations across Canada. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide



Year's best in beauty gifts

JANINE FALCON
for Metro Canada

Smoother hair, stronger and longer lashes, brighter eyes, better skin — it's been a good beauty year.

Here's what's tops in 2009.

That what you consume can boost your beauty is a given, but busy lives and stress interfere with our good-eat intentions. **Genuine Health Healthy Skin Chocolate Soft Chews** ($24.99/45 pieces) and **GliSODin Skin Nutrients Advanced Daily Formula supplements** ($95/60 capsules) each significantly improves skin with nutrient-rich natural ingredients. For retailers, go to genuinehealth.com and glisodinskin.com.

The eco-responsible, silicone-free **Live Clean Exotic Nectar Moroccan Collection** strengthens hair and ramps up shine with argan oil and certified-organic olive and grapeseed oils. From $6.99 at Shoppers Drug Mart.

Also making silicone-free waves in fuzz-free hair care and styling, the key **Living Proof No Frizz** ingredient, PolyfluoroEster, improves hair's own frizz resistance, and repels surface water, oils and dirt so you shampoo less often. Formulas target fine-to-medium hair, medium-to-thick hair and thick-to-coarse hair. Available for $26 each at Sephora.

Another anti-frizz helping hand, the nubby micro-fibre **Hand Dry Hair Glove** sucks up moisture right quick to help shape smooth curls and waves sans blowdryer. Available for $22.95 per pair at delineation.ca.

The cleverly woven **Upper Canada Ultimate Body Sponge** shower puff has a loofah-style side to buff away dry skin. Available for $5 at tweedandhickory.com.

Dove Deep Moisture Nourishing Bodywash takes steps toward more natural beauty care with moisturizing ingredients such as natural stearic acid, soybean oil and glycerin. Available for $6.99 (354 mL) at drug stores.

Kiehl's Açai Damage-Repairing Skincare, the company's first 100 per cent natural-origin line, use the super-antioxidant organic açai berry to improve all aspects of the complexion. Available for $35 to $65 at Kiehl's boutiques; log on to kiehls.com for other retailers.

Lancôme Génifique Youth Activator Serum rewinds to less aged times by stimulating production of specific "youth proteins" to rejuvenate skin. Available for $92 at drug and department stores.

Sensitive types get another wrinkle-fighting option — and a Canadian one, too — in **Cliniderm Anti-Wrinkle Cream**, which uses non-irritating peptide technology to reverse signs of aging. Available for $50 at drug stores.

Physicians Formula continues to blaze the mass green trail with gentle and effective as well as biodegradable **Organic Wear 100% Natural Origin Facial Makeup Remover Towelettes**. Available for $13.99 at Shoppers Drug Mart.

Oil-free cream-to-powder **Smashbox Camera Ready Full Coverage Foundation** contains silica beads to deliver a smooth, semi-matte finish that doesn't look heavy, and won't do the winter freeze-and-melt on your face. Available for $44 at Shoppers Drug Mart and Sephora.

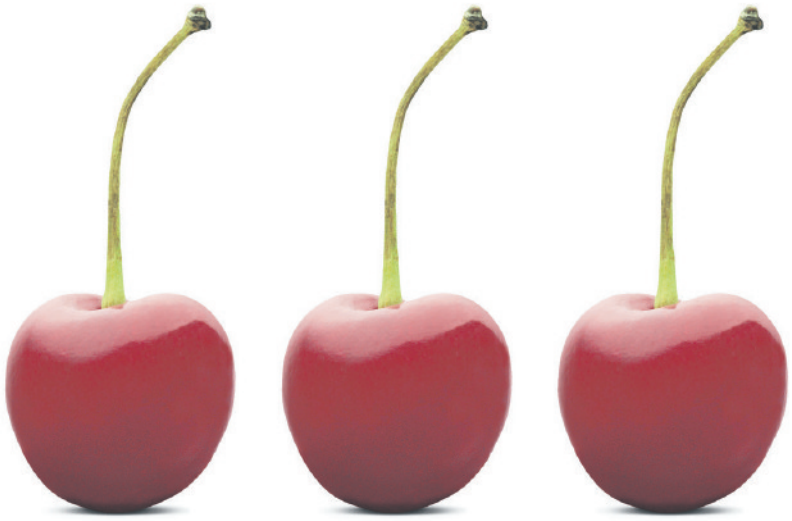
Deep, dark under-eye circles have a new hide-'em hero with **Conceal FX Camouflage Concealer**, which has a little orange in the mix to temper shadows without looking ashy. Available for $27 at Shoppers Drug Mart and Sephora.

One of the biggest Google questions is, "What's the best makeup for my eye colour?" **L'Oréal Paris Wear Infinité Made for Me Naturals Eye Shadow Quads** ($10.95 each) and **CoverGirl Exact Eye Enhancers Shadows** ($6.99) join Almay and Physicians Formula with accessible and affordable palettes to spotlight your natural hue. Both are available at drug and mass retailers.

Joe Fresh Beauty may well be the most successful marriage of sophistication and affordability beauty junkies have seen so far. From $4; go to joe.ca for locations.

The luxuriously emollient **Yves Saint Laurent Gloss Volupté Sheer Sensual Gloss Stick** is the year's Most Covetable for beauty-addicts everywhere. Available for $35 at Holt Renfrew and The Bay flagship stores.

Accessible, eco-minded fragrance — how sweet the smell. Try these: **Roots Source Bamboo** or **Red Tea eau de parfum**, both formulated with corn-based alcohol ($35 for 30 mL at Roots stores); **Nautica Oceans** — it's for him — is biodegradable and water-based ($57 for 50 mL at department stores); and **The Body Shop Love Etc.** is made with community-trade alcohol from organic sugar cane ($24 for 30 mL).



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*1 month of new services available for free to clients who have not subscribed to the requested services in the past 90 days and will be applied to the client's account within the first 12 months of service. †Offer available until December 31, 2009, to new clients who have not signed up for TELUS High Speed Internet service in the past 90 days. Rate shown is available when combined with one or more other TELUS home services. New High Speed clients receive an additional $15 off the regular price each month in months 2 to 6. Regular bundled rate of $30/month starts on month 7. An additional $5 per month will apply to monthly plan rates for High Speed clients who are not on a TELUS home bundle. Other charges may change (for instance, for additional download/upload data usage) and additional charges may apply on 30 days notice to the client. © 2009 TELUS.

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Rockstar style
Miller Jacket, $128, by Stella McCartney for GapKids and babyGap. For more, go to gapcanada.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Music to their ears

KEITH CARMAN
for Metro Canada

Christmas shopping is fun but there's always the inevitable freak-out: What the heck am I gonna buy (Insert Name Here)? Luckily, you've got music on your side.

For many, music is actually at the top of their wish list. With others, it's a safe, keep-on-giving bet ... provided you know their aural tastes. Regardless, navigating music store shelves can be daunting, with the thousands of albums released this year. That's why we here at Metro have compiled what we believe to be some of the strongest releases of 2009. Hopefully they'll give you ideas and your beloved audiophile endless holiday cheer.

Rockers will flip at AC/DC's collection Backtracks

Pop

Britney, Beyoncé and Pink released albums in 2008, so this year has seen more touring than new music from the major pop sensations. Still, one could do worse on the PG Richter scale than to pick up **Hannah Montana**'s latest album 3 (Walt Disney Records). If your kids prefer her sans a.k.a., **Miley Cyrus**' The Time of Our Lives (Hollywood) was noted as a strong affair, as was **The Jonas Brothers**' Lines, Vines And Trying Times (Hollywood).

Rock

For beneficiaries above driving age, surf the rock section. Back for another instalment of anthemnic radio tunes, **Bruce Springsteen** issued his 16th album Working On A Dream (Columbia), garnering a Number One slot on sales charts. Similarly, Irish rockers **U2** had their own chart-topper with 12th effort No Line On The Horizon (Interscope) and former grunge boys **Pearl Jam**'s ninth Backspacer (Monkeywrench) hit the mark as well.

Holding up the independent world, alt-country crooner **Neko Case**'s Middle Cyclone (Anti/Epitaph) simply rocked reviewers and public alike, whereas brash garage rock revivalists **The Black Lips** scored with 200 Million Thousand (Vice).

Extreme

As for metal, did **Metallica**'s Death Magnetic (Elektra) reign supreme? Not exactly. It sold well, but in terms of value, rivals **Megadeth** outmetal their colleagues with Endgame (Roadrunner). Still, they're both no match for thrash metal giants **Slayer** and ravenous, could-scare-the-heck-out-of-Stephen-King affair **World Painted Blood** (American). Back home, Toronto-based outfit **Sacrifice** returned from a 15-year silence to woo head-bangers universally with their newest The Ones I Condemn (Sonic Unyon).

A heartbeat away from metal, punk was just as active this year. There were a plethora of great records, but Winnipeg's political activists **Propagandhi** particularly nailed us to the wall on Supporting Caste (G7 Welcoming Committee), a rousing blast of expedient music with intelligent messages. On the lighter end of the spectrum, renowned pop/punkers **Green Day** will bring smiles to the greenhorn/curious punk fans with their acclaimed rock opera 21st Century Breakdown (Reprise).

Bring your loved ones audio cheer.

Country

Is that special someone more line dance than head bang? No worries. Old country held its own this year: **Brooks & Dunn** (Cowboy Town, Arista Nashville), **Hank Williams Jr.** (127 Rose Avenue, Curb), **Rosanne Cash** (The List, Manhattan), **Randy Travis** (Around The Bend, Warner), **Reba McEntire** (Keep On Loving You, Starstruck) and **George Strait** (Twang, MCA Nashville) all released albums worthy of their legacies/kept up with the new country heroes who won't be mentioned here.

Box sets

Something a little more glamorous is necessary? Fear not. 2009 has some of the greatest repackaging in history. Rockers will flip their wig (pun hopefully not intended) at Aussie mainstays **AC/DC**'s Backtracks (Columbia), a collection of album and live rarities spanning their 35-year career, housed in an amplifier-shaped case and boasting too many bonuses to comprehend.

A jaw-dropping "wow" is inevitable with indie rock founders **The Pixies**' debut box set Minotaur (4AD). It features 24K gold-plated CDs of their entire catalogue, video discs of performances and more. For the die-hard, a limited edition has all the music on vinyl, 72-page hardcover book and other bonuses housed in, get this, a custom clamshell.

Not to be outdone, **The Beatles** have their own collection for the discerning music fan this year. Stereo Box Set (Apple/EMI) finds the Fab Four in, well, stereo. Each of their 15 studio albums has been digitally re-mastered/packaged with album art, liner notes, rare photographs and short documentary films. If that's a bit much, no sweat. Re-mastered versions of each album will also be sold individually.

These are but a few examples of 2009's wonderful onslaught of music for all tastes. Yet it might make navigating music store shelves — and employees — a little less stressful.

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Holiday Shopping Guide

Hardware for the holidays

Stanley 149-piece black chrome mechanics set, $119, at Canadian Tire (canadiantire.ca). For more, go to stanley hardware.com.

Rigid 10" granite table top saw, $899, features a granite stone top. Available at Home Depot (homedepot.ca).

Porter Cable 18v lithium ion drill, $199.99, comes with two Li-Ion batteries. Available at Canadian Tire, Lowe's and other home hardware centres across Canada.

Dewalt 18" pro contractor's closed-top tool bag, $49.99, features 14 interior pockets to ensure that every nut and bolt has a spot. Available at Home Depot (homedepot.ca).

Black & Decker self-levelling laser with 3-in-1 stud finder, $59.95. Available at Home Depot (homedepot.ca).

Stanley 684-piece household kit, $12.97, includes nails, screws, thumbtacks, and more. Available at Walmart (walmart.ca). For more, go to stanleyhardware.com.

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SAMSUNG Electric Dryer - Models 79856/79878 - Original $999.99
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KENMORE "HE3T" Front Load Washer - Model 49962 - Original $1399.99
SALE $798.94 - 3 ONLY

FRIGIDAIRE Gallery Tall Tub Dishwasher - Model 98672 - Original $699.99
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AMANA Tall Tub Built-In Dishwasher - Model 96533 - Original $949.99
SALE $648.94 - 1 ONLY

CLEARANCE PRICED FURNITURE

TALLMAN 3 Wallaway Recliner Chair - Model 60115 - Original $799.99
SALE $399.99 - 1 ONLY

NICHOLAS Dining Server - Model 20358 - Original $799.99
SALE $299.99 - 1 ONLY

CURIO Side Door Unit - Model 81610 - Original $469.99
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CURIO Williamson Unit - Model 81241 - Original $1299.99
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ROYAL Sofa with Storage Chaise - Model (Black) 22411 - Original $2899.99
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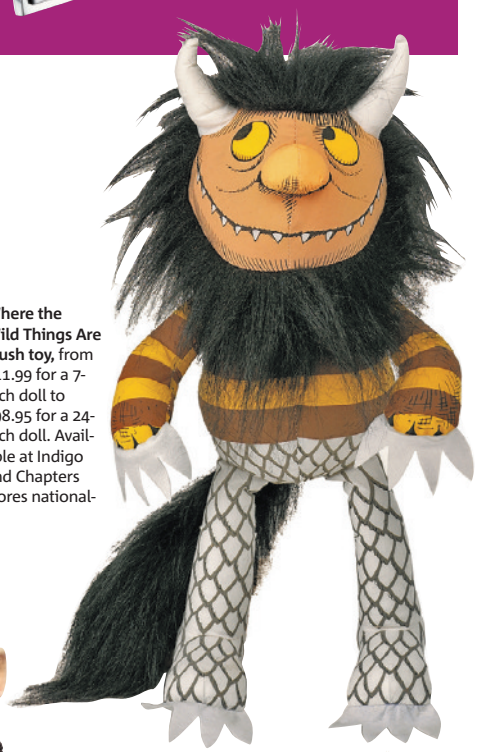
Holiday Shopping Guide

Soft & cuddly

What Christmas is all About Linus doll, $12.95. Press his foot and he says lines from A Charlie Brown Christmas. Available at Hallmark, hallmark.ca.

In the Night Garden talking plush dolls, $19.99 each. There's Igglepiggle, Makka Pakka, at right, and Upsy Daisy (not shown). Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us.



Where the Wild Things Are plush toy, from $11.99 for a 7-inch doll to $98.95 for a 24-inch doll. Available at Indigo and Chapters stores nationally.

Littlest Pet Shop Online, $12.99. Use your pet's secret code to unlock a special online community, where you can play games, make virtual pets and more. Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us.

FURREAL FRIENDS CUDDLE CHIMP
This realistic-looking chimpanzee loves to snuggle and cuddle; give him a hug and he hugs you back. He'll let you know he's ready for a hug by stretching out his arms.
$59.99
Available at major retailers across Canada, including Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us.
hasbro.com

Cameron the Charity Bear, $9.99; $2 from every purchase goes directly to President's Choice Children's Charity, which provides direct financial assistance to families with children with physical and development disabilities to make difficult lives a little easier. For more, go to pc.ca.

Plush animals, $12 each at Bath & Body Works stores across Canada. For more, go to bathandbody works .com.

Farmyard Skittles, $29 at shopunicef.ca.

Eco Pals, $19.99 each. These plush toys are made from all organic or recycled materials. Available at Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.

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Give green
This Solar Car, $34.99, zips around like a regular radio-controlled car but it's solar-powered. Available at Sears, sears.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Baby, it's cold outside

Knit gloves with button detail, $9.99, at Winners. For store hours and locations, call 1-877-946-6877 or visit winners.ca.

Trapper hat, $19, by Joe Fresh Style. For more, go to joe.ca.

Team Canada scarf, $20, and **Team Canada toque,** $20. Available at The Bay.

MICHAEL Michael Kors black side lace-up leather gloves, $98. For availability, call 1-866-733-5677.

Wool fringe scarf, $24.50 at Gap. For more, go to gapcanada.com.

Red wool coat, $89, by Joe Fresh Style. For more, go to joe.ca.

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Husky MOHAWK

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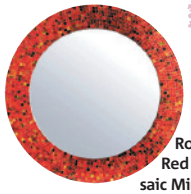
Hours of fun
Star Wars fans will love this Play-Doh R2D2 playset, $22.99, which includes an Anakin book mould. Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Winter wonderland



Round Red Mosaic Mirror, $99.95 at Pier 1 Imports. For more, go to pier1.ca.

Jewel detailed silk cushions, $49.99. Available at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.

Snowflake beaded stocking, $12.99, by PC Home. For more, go to superstore.ca.

Santa Floor Piece, $149 at Pier 1 Imports. For more, go to pier1.ca.

Silver leaf birch moulded vases, $19.99 for the smaller one, and $24.99 for the larger one. Available at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.

Faux fur throw, $29.99, by PC Home. For more, go to superstore.ca.

Holiday taffeta cushion, $9.99 each, by PC Home. For more, go to superstore.ca.

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The Holiday Gift Guide at Fine Finds
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Fashion-forward
Moxie Girlz Art-titude dolls, $14.99-$34.99, include accessories and clothing that girls can custom-design. Available at major retailers across Canada. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Grooming gifts for him

JANINE FALCON
for Metro Canada

Guys, don't even try to pretend you wouldn't appreciate quality grooming products as a gift — at least it would save you shopping for yourself.

Here's a round-up of great-hair and great-skin stuff to put on your holiday wish list. You know you want it.

Get your morning tingle here: **L'Oréal Professionnel Homme Energic Ice Mint + Ginseng Shampoo.** Wakey, wakey! Available for $14.50; go to lorealprofessionnel.ca for salons.

We know you love a multi-tasker: **Fruits & Passion F/P Homme 003 Shower Gel Hair and Body** is a hair-to-toes deal. Available for $15 at Fruits & Passion boutiques.

The **Gillette Scrubber** is a manly shower puff so you can get your scrub on. Available for $4.99 at drugstores. For revved-up dry-skin sloughing, try the **Dermalogica Ultimate Buffing Cloth** with shower gel, then lotion up — no joke — within three minutes of towelling off. Available for $24; go to dermalogica.ca for retailers.

Toronto-based Bill Baker created organic skin and body care because his sensitive skin asked for it. His **Consonant Body Pure Unscented Organic Foaming Face Wash** and **Body Lotion** might answer your skin's call too. Available for $18 and $22 at The Bay, select Sears stores, and consonantbody.com.

Oxy Acne Fighting Face Formula Face Wash is part of a whole facial grooming line that helps put the kybosh on breakouts. Available for $11 at drug stores.

The Art of Shaving and Gillette teamed up to produce the high-end **Fusion Chrome Collection Power Razor**, with micro-pulse action for better glide and a spotlight to show up those hard-to-see spots. Available for $150 at Harry Rosen and Holt Renfrew.

More for your sensitive side: **Nivea for Men Easy Cross Shave Gel**, $6, and **La Roche-Posay XY Homme Anti-Redness Normalizing Balm**, $27. Both at drug stores.

With its sleek design, roller-ball tip and cooling formula, **Biotherm Homme High Recharge Yeux Anti-Fatigue Cold Eye-Serum** could be the easiest way to get a you to use an under-eye treatment — whaddya say? Available for $40 at drug stores.

That you've been buying **Neostrata Intense Daytime Total Anti-Age Complex SPF 15** for yourself means you've definitely learned something about effective anti-wrinkle skincare from swiping from your lady's stash. Props. Available for $84 at drug stores.

Good for your hair and environmentally responsible: **David Babaii for Wildaid Volcanic Ash Sculpting Clay**, $13 at Sears or DB4Wildaid. com.

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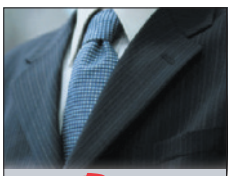

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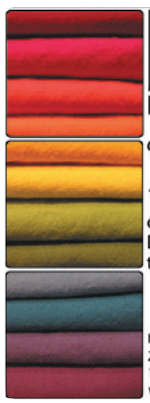

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Some hints for first-time holiday dinner hosts

Remember to honour important or fun family traditions; If you want to do something new, introduce it along with the more traditional aspects. If you are cooking, stick to the tried and true. Don't choose this time to try out a new recipe. SYLVIA PUTZ/FOR METRO CANADA

Metro Homes

Dinner decor

Only decorate your home for your Christmas dinner in a few key places. To minimize work, stick to visible areas, like the mantel above the fireplace, stair railings, and the Christmas tree. —SYLVIA PUTZ

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

A decade of changing decor

Homes go practical and casual in 2000s

Goodbye to the armoire and the dining room (in many cases, the living room, too). Hello to the home office.

Seen here are some of the trends that came and went (or stayed) this decade.

Repurposed rooms, recycled materials and an increasingly relaxed decorating style characterize the end of a decade that began as a party on a grand scale.

These are among the home decor trends cited by experts as the 2000s draws to a close.

Over the past 10 years, the formal living room in most homes has been reinvented — it's now a library, workspace, perhaps a music or game room.

The most well-liked rooms now are the home office, mud room and media room, the survey indicated. What we don't want so much anymore? Three-car garages, guest rooms and formal living rooms.

Some trends over the past 10 years:

Living large

At the start of the 2000s, many jumped on the real estate thrill ride. McMansions, gobblers of space and energy dollars, became ubiquitous. Now, we're rethinking how we live, says Jennifer Boles, founder of The Peak of Chic design blog and contributing editor to House Beautiful. Oversize furniture like sectionals and big coffee tables, popular at the start of the decade, are scaled down.

However, one oversize space remains popular: "The spa bathroom is the new two-car garage — a must-have if you ever want to sell your home," says Homegoods' Philip Tracey.

Living al fresco

"The outdoor room's really been one of the biggest changes. Everyone has an outdoor space now, even if it's tiny," says Elle Decor's Cheminne Taylor-Smith. "With seating, dining, even kitchens and sleeping pieces, these rooms are treated like their indoor counterparts."

Living green

After a long fallow period, gardening took off in the past few years. From containers to victory gardens, we've got our hands back in the dirt. We're concerned about the provenance of produce, and about our carbon footprint. We're putting down less pesticide. More of us are composting.

Living creatively

Americans are spending about $260 billion US a year on home improvement projects, according to the Housing Industry Research Council. That's up about $90 billion from 2000. Empowered by informative blogs, magazines and TV shows, the DIY boom continues.

With more creative freedom now to express our personalities at home, the world became our inspirational marketplace.

Living relaxed

We've loosened up. It's OK to have the computer and TV in the heart of the home. There's been a shift toward a more practical, casual lifestyle. As designer Mark Hampton says, "Real comfort, visual and physical, is vital to every room."

Suites of furniture? Passe. Untouchable formal rooms? Over. We're comfortable mixing and matching

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Other hallmarks

- Stainless steel appliances, granite counters, mid-century modern furniture, media furniture, home theatres, Craftsman style, ottomans, wallpaper, cherry cabinetry, low-profile home entertainment systems (flat screens, mini speakers), less-is-more window treatments, high pigment one-coat paints.

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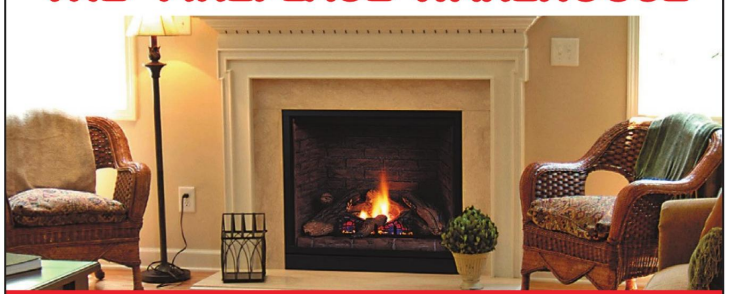

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Esprit's celebrity campaign
Esprit's spring/summer 2010 campaign will feature Daisy Lowe, daughter of vocalist Pearl Lowe and Bush front man Gavin Rossdale. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Style

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

A *blue* 2010

Turquoise is next year's hot shade: Pantone

If colour is any guide, we'll be moving into vacation mode in 2010 with the world awash in tropical turquoise, forecasters say.

Turquoise was selected as the colour of 2010 by Pantone, a company that supplies and tracks colour for fashion and home decor, among other industries. Fashion insiders agreed the colour is on the rise.

"Turquoise is universally appealing. It puts everyone in the same state of mind — on vacation," says Jane Schoenborn, design director at Lilly Pulitzer. "Turquoise for us is a really big colour. A lot of times it's transporting, whether you're actually going to a resort destination or not."

Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, says there was no runner-up to turquoise in her mind because people crave escapism and freshness after a tough year. The shade is on the cusp of blue and green, which makes it both inviting and serene — characteristics associated with blues — and invigorating and luminous, which comes from green, she says.

"Transporting" was a word many used for turquoise, a shade that takes designer Tommy Hilfiger to the beach, especially the Caribbean, St. Tropez, France, or Southern California, which served as the inspiration for his newest collection. In jewelry, he thinks of the American Southwest, or Central or South America.

"The women in my life wear it on vacation and it looks great with a suntan at the beach," Hilfiger says.

Pantone's colour for 2009 was mimosa yellow, intended to carry a hopeful, optimistic message. Eiseman says the public is shifting gears as the economy shows some improvement: They are ready to fantasize a bit about the beach resort.

She also notes that in many cultures turquoise is considered a protective colour with people wearing the blue-stone jewelry almost as a talisman. "You often hear it attached to words like 'healing.'"

But Hilfiger urges a little caution in wearing it. "I love it for women and I strongly dislike it for men. ... If men are to wear blue, they should wear light blue or dark blue."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Springtime cruise bracelet ($50) and necklace ($65). Available at Banana Republic.

Jacquard sparkle pashmina ($22). Available at Le Chateau stores.

Turquoise tip

- Textile quality is an issue with turquoise, says designer Tommy Hilfiger. It can be very luxe looking in the right fabric, but it risks looking cheap in a bad one.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RIGHT: Striped shirt ($33.99). Available at talbots.com.

Wedding gown trends

At the most recent round of wedding fashion previews, insiders say there might have been a little less beading and fewer exotic trims to keep costs down, but there wasn't an industry-wide movement toward gowns on the cheap. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This red clutch with a zipper-lined flower is $138 from Aldo.

Zippers proudly on display

An open zipper is an embarrassing faux pas, but an exposed zipper is all the rage.

The utilitarian garment closure is suddenly in the spotlight as a decorative trim on accessories.

The Ugly Betty of the notions family, the zipper, with its garish metal teeth, was never admired like the button, its close cousin, which performs a similar fastening function and is proudly on display for all the world to see.

Even the zipper's birthplace is uncertain. It is often claimed to have been invented in Canada by Swede Gideon Sundback, who patented a fastener design in 1917 and manufactured them in St. Catharines, Ont. Evidence exists, however, suggesting American Elias Howe held an earlier patent (1851) on a gizmo resembling the modern zipper.

While fashion readily embraced the design for its modernity and practicality, the zip was always hidden by plackets and folds of fabric. In the past few seasons, it was Lanvin designer Alber Elbaz who left the closures uncovered on his beautiful silk frocks, showing off the industrial-looking metal track like an exposed spine.

Now it appears that fashion is having a full-blown affair with the now-fashionable fastener and embracing it for purely decorative purposes. Suddenly those jagged little teeth are a thing of beauty.

Zippers are now folded and furled as pretty rosettes on a necklace or tied into pretty bows for your hair. They even outshine their functional counterparts on boots, snaking seductively around the foot.

No longer just a zip, they've got sizzle.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A model wears sustainably produced fashion by Nordic fashion designers.

Green styles hit the runway

ECO-FRIENDLY Forget the animal-unfriendly fur coat and the painted-on pants made from polluting petroleum-based products. A runway show in Copenhagen last week aimed to show that "green styles" — some of them stitched in fabrics made from recycled agricultural or industrial waste — can be just as fashionable. The display brought together 20 designers from five Nordic countries and representatives of such retailing heavyweights as H&M and Barneys.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gyllenhaal and Witherspoon could be done
The rumours appear to be true. Jake Gyllenhaal and Reese Witherspoon are no longer together, according to Gossip Cop, a website dedicated to confirming or debunking tabloid tales. METRO WORLD NEWS

Entertainment

Wedding bells?
Joshua Jackson is ready to settle down with long-term girlfriend Diane Kruger and can see himself marrying the German beauty. Jackson, 31, has been dating the Inglourious Basterds actress since 2006. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ A CLASSIC; ⊕⊕⊕⊕ EXCELLENT; ⊕⊕⊕ GOOD; ⊕⊕ FAIR; ⊕ POOR

Keys keeps getting better

Jimmy Buffett, Timbaland among other new releases

GETTY IMAGES

Alicia Keys sings about broken hearts, loneliness and finding strength on The Element of Freedom.

Alicia Keys

Album: The Element of Freedom **Label:** J/Sony Music
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕⊕

IF THERE'S ONE musician other artists should envy it's Alicia Keys. She's easily one of the most talented artists around, and continues to improve with every record. Her latest is an intensely passionate record about broken hearts, loneliness and finding strength. It might be a bit preachy, but with solid songwriting — the soaring Love is Blind is one of her most infectious tunes yet — blaring pipes and top notch piano playing, she's still far ahead of her peers.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Jimmy Buffett

Album: Buffett Hotel
Label: Mailboat/Fontana North
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

THIS IS AN impossible record to dislike, especially for the legions of Parrotheads out there. Buffett's songwriting craft has lost none of its ability to go to the places that mean most to his fans and veering somewhat left of mid-life crisis. His wry wit shines though on A Lot to Drink About, a Buffett state-of-the-world address. He boils things down to essentials on Surfing in a Hurricane and Beautiful Swimmers. And when he reverts to cover other artists, he picks only the best — Bruce Cockburn (Life Short Call Now) and Jesse Winchester (Rhumba Man). Still, it's not going to win him over many new fans.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

AlbumReviews
music@metronews.ca

Robin Thicke

Album: Sex Therapy: The Session **Label:** Universal
Rating: ⊕⊕½

UNTIL NOW, ROBIN Thicke has managed to create some of the most inoffensive, yet still welcoming R&B sounds. His music was always nice, something you could play in front of your parents. His latest however, is all about doin' it. That would be all well and good if the music was as reliable as his past efforts. Songs like Make U Love Me, a stripped down, electro-tinged club track with the line "Mr. Big is in your hands" is nauseating, while It's The Mornin' or rather "sex in the morning" as he sings, is too R. Kelly for its own good.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Timbaland

Album: Shock Value II
Label: Interscope/Universal
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

THE TIMBALAND SOUND has dominated pop music for the past five years. Now, frankly, we're getting a bit tired of it. Tim sticks to the same formula of synthetic clapbeats backing occasional flights of melody and autotone-tainted vocals from a revolving cast of A-list pop stars. Justin Timberlake and Nelly Furtado are back, sounding pretty much like all the other Timbaland stuff they've done, except without the hit potential. New dalliances with Katy Perry and Miley Cyrus would be forgettable if there was anything worth remembering about them. The interesting tracks here are the ones backed by Timbaland's little brother, rapper Sebastian, and Canadian singer Esthero. Still, it's hard to imagine this Timbaland sound continuing into the next decade without radical revision.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Animal Collective

Album: Fall Be Kind
Label: Domino
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

ANIMAL COLLECTIVE IS now sampling the Grateful Dead (Unbroken Chain from Mars Hotel), which just goes to show ... all good drugs lead to the same place. The problem is that nods to classics like the Dead or acid-era Beach Boys only serve as reminders that the best psychedelic music is more than just collages of freaky sounds. Melody remains important as does poetic imagery. Sound effects should be in the background, keeping you wondering whether they're really there or not. Animal Collective chooses to push them into the foreground, leaving only remnants of the melodic patterns and choral flourishes that we know are there, somewhere. But, man, these sounds sure are freaky.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Gucci Mane

Album: The State vs. Radric Davis **Label:** Warner
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕½

AS WE ALL know too well, being a rap star doesn't preclude one from a jail sentence. While Gucci Mane did beat a murder charge, he's now back in prison for violating parole. Luckily, he can stay in the spotlight with his new, and damn good, album. The appropriately titled The State vs. Radric Davis (his given name) is a pure southern rap disc. It's slow, plodding and chunky, just how a solid Atlanta hip-hop album should sound. And with a plethora of guest stars — Usher and Lil Wayne — his fans will no doubt wait for him.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

D20 Topshelf small

Tara Reid's hard-partying youth is over, and the star tells Playboy that she's now a mature, grounded woman. "I'm happy with my life now, and I'd like to keep it this way," Reid tells the magazine. **POPEATER.COM**

2009's wacky, tacky top celeb moments

CELEBRITIES If only there were more Kanye Wests in the world.

No wait — lemme finish!! Yes, West proved he was a complete jerk when he jumped onstage and interrupted Taylor Swift's glory moment at the MTV Video Music Awards. It was a moment audiences live to see. But what if West could have interrupted those other moments we didn't want to see?

Then we wouldn't be nursing scarred brains caused by 2009's worst moments, such as a smiling Joe Jackson hawking his record label for cameras a few days after his son Michael's death or octo-dad Jon Goesslin's creepy transformation from henpecked husband to sleazeball.

Here's samplings of more Wacky & Tacky moments of the past year:

TIGER'S SWING: Did you ever think we'd be handicapping Tiger's mistresses instead of his golf game? Sports' ultimate boy scout became the tabloid gift that kept on giving when a bizarre car accident outside his home started a chain that revealed he had more side dishes than an all-you-can-eat buffet. From porn stars to waitresses, the married father-of-two may showed that his conquests included more than the world of golf.

THIS IS WHY THEY INVENTED THE TERM "NO COMMENT": Let's be honest — when you expect sage social and political commentary from a beauty contestant, you've got a problem (see Sarah Palin). But it's bizarre that Carrie Prejean's anti-gay marriage stance at a Miss USA pageant seemed to set off more fury than when the same sentiments were uttered by any other elected officials (including the U.S. president). Still, it's hard to feel sorry for Prejean, who latched on to the family values contingent, but then it was revealed that she had breast implants, nude photos and a solo sex tape.

MAYBE CHINA WAS RIGHT: Sure, a one-child policy might seem a little extreme, but after watching the questionable to downright scary parenting skills of Nadya Suleman and Jon and Kate Gosselin, maybe the United States needs to take note.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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So cool, then so not

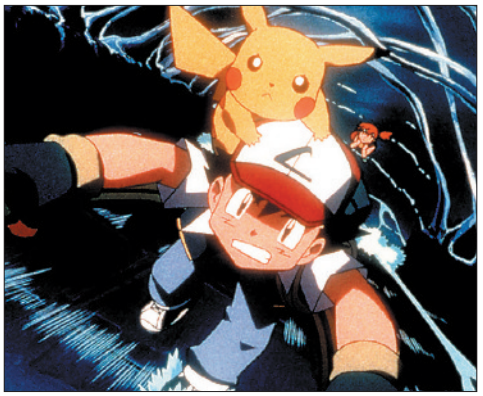
With more fads than folks at an American Idol audition, the past decade has been a difficult time to culturally define. One day, everyone was updating their MySpace profiles while sporting Ugg boots and sipping cosmopolitans. The next, they were creating Facebook pages while donning Ed Hardy T-shirts and downing energy drinks.

Superheroes, disaster movies, reality TV, professional wrestling and a boy wizard named Harry Potter weathered the decade's ever-changing pop culture storm while others rode the aughts like a roller coaster. Britney Spears was in, then out, then in again, advantageously morphing herself from teen queen to train wreck to pop diva within the 10-year span.

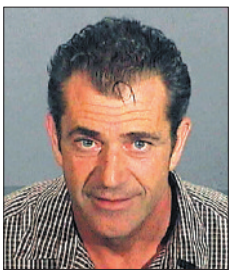
Others returned from yesteryear — or space, as in the case of the reinvigorated Star Wars and Star Trek franchises — to reclaim their pop culture glory. Not every entertainment hallmark was so successful in overcoming revolving taste buds. Here are 10 things that were oh-so-hot at the beginning of the 2000s that turned totally cold by the bitter end:

"WASSUP?" Those once funny Budweiser beer commercials had the nation growling "wassup?" after the campaign debuted at the end of 1999. The wacky greeting went on to face a barrage of parodies in the new millennium. The original "wassup?" dudes reteamed in 2008 for a viral video marking President Barack Obama's win before quickly fading back into obscurity.

NAPSTER. The free file-sharing service was the "it" way to grab digital tunes at the dawn of the 21st century. Created by 19-year-old Shawn Fanning, the program ignited a legal brouhaha with the recording industry. By the time Napster transformed into a subscription service, listeners had moved on to iTunes. Today, Napster is owned by Best Buy.



Kids went crazy for anything Pokémon ... cards, toys, backpacks.



Mel Gibson's mugshot from his 2006 arrest for DUI

SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES. When gas was still below $2 US a gallon, supersized rides enjoyed a passionate following among musicians, professional athletes and other celebrities who needed big cars to accommodate their big egos. As the green movement grew throughout the '00s, many stars traded in their gas-guzzling luxury SUVs for sleek eco-friendly hybrids.

WHO WANTS TO MARRY A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE? Fifty women vied to be the bride of mystery man Rick Rockwell, who picked nurse Darva Conger to wed in an impromptu 2000 ceremony that drew over 20 million viewers. The pair later annulled the marriage, and Fox opted against future installments. Viewers everywhere felt guilty for watching the sleazy TV spectacle.

MEL GIBSON. The suave actor-director was riding high at the beginning of the aughts with The Patriot, What Women Want and The Passion of the Christ, but what he will likely be remembered most for this decade is his infamous slur-filled 2006 drunken driving arrest. After completing his three-year probation, Gibson's conviction was expunged in 2009.

MAGAZINES. Long before the world was bookmarking blogs and social networking sites, glossy magazines were the pre-eminent place to learn about timely trends. The medium suffered as more folks went online and the economy went south. The end of the decade saw the demise of publications including Gourmet, Cosmo-Girl, Jane, Blender, Giant, Cookie and PC Magazine.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE. In 2001, five years before Nintendo revolutionized gaming with the Wii, the Mario Bros. mastermind plopped down the GameCube, the Wii's itty-bitty precursor featuring a clunky controller. The console's robust graphics initially piqued players' interest, but the GameCube could not overcome Sony's mega-popular PlayStation 2 system.

OLD NAVY PERFORMANCE FLEECE. Complete with its own catchy jingle ("Old Navy! Old Navy! Performance fleece!"), it was the must-have affordable accessory. Now, no one would be caught dead in a "tech vest." And the retailer's celebrity commercial cameos — hey, look, it's Morgan Fairchild and Sherman Hemsley! — have been replaced by talking mannequins.

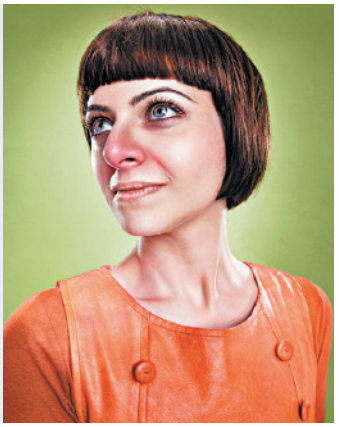
POKÉMON. The "pocket monster" franchise was a full-blown craze with kids at the start of the '00s, having already spawned several movies, TV series, video games and toys. Love for Pikachu waned, though, as tots turned into teens. Pokémon 4Ever, the third Pokémon film, flopped at the box office and subsequent sequels went direct to DVD in the U.S.

'NSYNC. The boy band jump-started the '00s with the album No Strings Attached, which continues to hold the record for biggest first-week CD sales at 2.4 million. Another album and a few tours later, the quintet quietly disbanded. They spent the rest of the aughts pursuing solo careers while simultaneously addressing reunion rumours. Maybe next decade?

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FIGHT ON, BRAVE SOUL.
GET THROUGH THE SEASON HALLS

For tips to help you stay well during cold & flu season, visit gethalls.ca.
For the temporary relief of sore throat, cough and nasal congestion. Always read and follow the directions for use.



Some new blood for True Blood
True Blood fans will have something to growl about now that the show has cast Joe Manganiello as Alcide Herveaux, who will appear in season three as a werewolf love interest for Sookie Stackhouse. PEOPLE.COM

Legal battle looms over Jackson estate

Jackson's estate may have earned $100 million or more with the sale of rights to the concert film, This Is It.

The administrators of Michael Jackson's estate and a cadre of attorneys are seeking millions for managing the King of Pop's affairs after death, court documents filed Tuesday show.

It's unclear how much exactly will be paid out.

The administrators of Jackson's estate, attorney John Branca and music executive John McClain, are seeking five per cent of money the estate has earned so far.

The administrators and attorneys have not been paid since Jackson's death on June 25, the filings state.

"Unlike the typical estate, the operation of Michael Jackson's estate is akin to the operation of a multimillion dollar enterprise."
Attorney Jeryll S. Cohen

The estate may have earned $100 million or more with the sale of rights to the concert film This Is It, new music releases and merchandising agreements.

But Jackson's estate also faces significant debt and a lawsuit cites at least 10 lawsuits that are still pending. They include suits over the rights to Thriller, Jackson's iconic song and music video directed by John Landis, and lawsuits filed by former associates.

The filings state that a detailed accounting of the estate's earnings is not ready, but attorneys have filed some financial records for the judge to review.

Many experts believe that Jackson's estate earnings could eclipse those of another famous, and profitable, music icon — Elvis Presley.

"Unlike the typical estate, the operation of Michael Jackson's estate is more akin to the operation of a multimillion dollar business enterprise," attorney Jeryll S. Cohen wrote in a filing.

Payments would also go to a variety of firms, including one representing the interests of Jackson's three children, Prince-Michael, Paris, and Prince-Michael II.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cast of hit series 'gleeful' over Golden Globes nod

The mood on the set was appropriately gleeful.

The musical-dramedy Glee got some serious Golden Globe love Tuesday, with more nominations than any show. Among the Fox series' four nominations: best television series – comedy or musical.

On the Paramount Studios lot, where Glee is filmed, the show's cast could be found Tuesday hugging and laughing after hearing the news.

"Amazing," said Corey Monteith, who plays football hunk Finn Hudson. "It is kind of like, it is like Christmas morning."

"The four best presents ever," added actor Kevin McHale.

Besides the nod to the series, Glee received nominations for Matthew Morrison and Lea Michele, two Broadway veterans who are TV newcomers. Veteran stage and screen actress Jane Lynch also earned a bid for best supporting actress in a series, miniseries or movie.

"I slept through (the nominations announcement)," Lynch said. "But, I got up to six messages and went, 'Ah! I wonder if there is some good news for us?' And there was. My agent called me three times and said, 'Why aren't you up?' So, yeah. I called my mom, and she said, 'The golden what?'"

Glee airs Wednesday nights on Fox

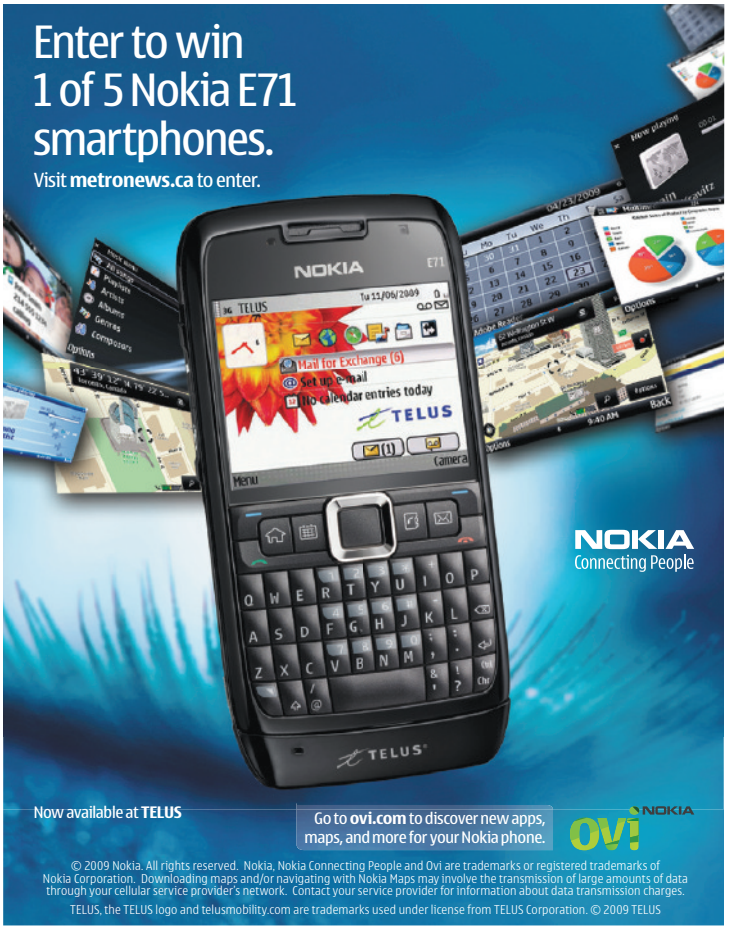
Michele said she and her mother used to dress up just to watch awards shows at home. So, no surprise that Michele was at a loss for words upon hearing of her nomination.

"I can't, I can't even believe it," said Michele, also a Drama Desk nominee for Spring Awakening. "My mother just said to me, 'When I get out of this shock, I will congratulate you properly.' I think when I snap out of this shock, I don't know when it is going to happen, but if someone here hears a scream somewhere in L.A. at any point, it is probably me finally realizing what actually is happening."

The 67th annual Golden Globe Awards will be presented Jan. 17 in Hollywood.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fox's hit series Glee was nominated for four Golden Globe awards, including best television series – comedy or musical.



No purchase necessary. Enter daily for more chances to win. Contest open to Canadian residents of legal age, excluding residents of Quebec. Contest closes Dec. 21st at 11:59pm. Odds of winning depend on number of entries received. For full contest rules and details, visit www.metronews.ca.

Not a hobbit

Tobey Maguire is not appearing in The Hobbit. The actor has dispelled rumours he has signed up to play Bilbo Baggins in the upcoming movie adaptation of the prequel to the Lord of the Rings trilogy. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Entertainment in brief

ALL BY MYSELF Nick Jonas' new band, Nick Jonas&The Administration, is getting ready to perform as the house band for the Critics' Choice Movie Awards on Jan. 15. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Aliens from another planet

Weaver explores a very different role in Avatar from Aliens

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

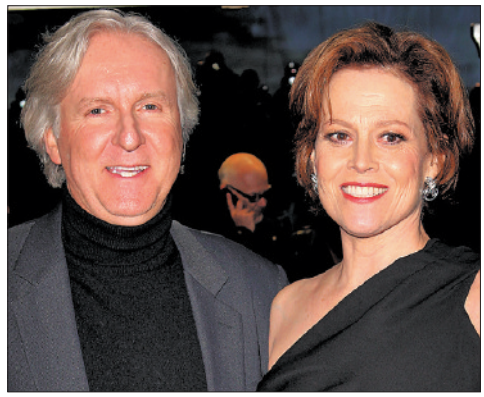
Sigourney Weaver admits her role as Dr. Grace Augustine in James Cameron's long-awaited movie Avatar was something new for her.

"It was wonderful to play someone who ends up finding her true happiness and her true home in an alien life, especially after my history with aliens," the veteran actress says with a laugh.

Weaver's Dr. Augustine serves as part of a team of humans studying the Na'vi, an indigenous people on an alien planet whose home just happens to rest over a mother lode of minerals earth needs to fix its energy crisis.

And Weaver relished the chance to play a professional woman as complex as Grace.

"Grace was a wonderful combination of qualities. She's full of authority and wit, but she's also a very conflicted person," Weaver explains.



Director James Cameron and actress Sigourney Weaver arrive at the premiere of the film Avatar

"I admire women who've devoted themselves to the study of certain things or certain causes."

Teaming up again with Cameron, who helped cement Weaver's status as a science-fiction icon in Aliens, was a simple decision to make.

"There are a lot of big movies that involve special effects," she says.

"Jim Cameron is the only one I know who understands that special effects are not for effect.

"He uses them to enhance the emotional story and to make even sharper — in this case through 3-D — the sensory experience of the audience experiencing the story."

Given the environmental thrust of the story in Avatar, Weaver admits there could have been a better place to premiere it other than London — such as the U.N. Climate Change Conference happening at the same time in Denmark.

"I'm sorry that we didn't show this at the kick-off of Copenhagen," Weaver says, though she thinks a younger audience will have greater effect.

"You know what I think is going to work? A lot of families will see this movie, and they'll talk about the message.

"I think children will hold us to this because they know this is the world they're inheriting. I'm cautiously optimistic."

Avatar opens in theatres tomorrow

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/17/09	251	308	3 CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Miracle on 34th Street ★★★ (1994) Richard Attenborough.				CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	254	-	8 OMNI	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		The Simpsons
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Access H.	Criminal Minds "Retaliation"		CSI: Crime Scene Investigat'n		The Mentalist "Throwing Fire"		CTV News
	-	-	10 JOY	Frasier (CC)	The Insider	Stargate SG-1 (CC)		Supernatural (CC)		P3	Ek Noor	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Survivor: Samoa (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Family Guy	90210 (CC)		News
	256	389	12 VI	New Canoe	TMZ (N) (CC)	Grey's Anatomy "Goodbye"		Fringe (CC)		Stargate Atlantis		A News (N)
	253	359	13 CITY	The Office	The Office	Scrubs (CC)	Better Off Ted	30 Rock	30 Rock	The Jay Leno Show (N) (CC)		The CityNews
	-	-	14 CW	The Office	The Office	The Vampire Diaries (CC)		The Vampire Diaries (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Survivor: Samoa (N) (CC)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigat'n		The Mentalist "Throwing Fire"		KIRO 7 News
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	Saturday Night Live Presents: A Very Gilly Christmas (N)				The Jay Leno Show (N) (CC)		KING 5 News
	602	568	19 W	Crazy for Christmas (2005) Andrea Roth, Howard Hesseman.				Borrowed Hearts (1997) Roma Downey, Eric McCormack.				Maxed Out
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Grey's Anatomy "Goodbye"		Grey's Anatomy (CC)		(:01) Private Practice (CC)		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	26 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Polyester ★★ (1981, Comedy) Divine, Tab Hunter.				Seinfeld	King	Cheers (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Back Care Basics: Yoga		Lark Rise to Candleford		Lark Rise to Candleford		Members' Choice		
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bones Half-eaten body found.		Fringe (CC)		Q13 FOX News at Ten (N)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	As Time Goes By Reunion Special (CC)				A Stern View: The Journey Begins			The Big Band Years	
	296	654	54 SBK	The Office	Name Is Earl	Frasier (CC)	'70s Show	South Park	Half & Half	Paid Program	Hatchett	Paid Program
	298	653	55 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	The Vampire Diaries (CC)		The Vampire Diaries (CC)		KTLA Prime News (N) (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	66 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Maury Paternity results. (CC)	
	297	652	67 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	According-Jim	Family Guy	South Park	Scrubs (CC)
	199	311	76 STR	CTV News	NTV Latenight News		Late Show W/Letterman		Late Late Show/Ferguson		Inside Edition	Seinfeld
news	502	390	29 NW	The Nature of Things (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		The Nature of Things (CC)		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	NFL Football: Colts at Jaguars			Sportsnet	Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	(6:30) NHL Hockey Los Angeles Kings at Calgary Flames.				SportsCentre	Salt Lake	World Poker Tour: Season 7		SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Ghost Hunters "O.K. Corral"		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Ghost Hunters "O.K. Corral"		Bounty Hunter
	410	403	54 SCR	Score Now	NBA Basketball Phoenix Suns at Portland Trail Blazers. (Subject to Blackout)					Score Now		Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pass Time	Pass Time	Pinks -- All Out		Pinks Out	Jacked!	Wrecked
	416	409	144 GLF	(6:00) Fútbol Colombiano		Bundesliga	Ftb Today	Gol TV News	Bundesliga	Gol TV News	Gol TV News	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Legend of Frosty		Hates Chris	8 Rules	8 Rules	What I Like	Family Biz	Prank Patrol	Adrenaline
	555	545	50 TEL	Little Spirit	Bah, Humduck!	Looney Tunes	6TEEN	Futurama	King of Hill	V for Vendetta ★★★ (2006) Natalie Portman.		
	557	541	51 FAM	Sonny Chance	Zack & Cody	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School	Cory in House	That's-Raven
	553	546	53 TRE	Babar (CC)	Zigby	Max & Ruby	Dragon	Backyard	Ni Hao	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Frontiers of Construction		A Tudor Feast at Christmas		The Choir "Boys Don't Sing"		(:01) Lost in La Mancha ★★★ (2002) (CC)		
	575	583	20 CMT	Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Home for Christmas		Carrie Underwood: An All-Star Holiday Special (CC)				Home Imp.
	570	580	24 MM	Love Court	Instant Star	Hottest Rock Videos of-09		Muchmusic Countdown (CC)			Video on Trial	MuchMeg
	600	564	25 H&G	House	House	Holmes Inspection (CC)		Renovation	Renovation	Holmes on Homes (CC)		House
	615	520	31 A&E	The First 48 "Ditched" (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		(:01) The First 48 (CC)		(:01) The First 48 (CC)		The First 48
	628	584	32 SPKE	(6:00) TNA Wrestling (N)		UFC Unleashed		MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	Hard Target
	521	560	34 TLC	BBQ Pitmasters (N) (CC)		American Chopper (CC)		BBQ Pitmasters (CC)		American Chopper (CC)		BBQ Pit
	616	522	39 SHO	The Outer Limits (CC)		Da Vinci's City Hall		Found.	Paradise Falls	Bones "The He in the She"		NCIS (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	(6:00) A Winter Tale (2007)		Law & Order "Breeder" (CC)		Without a Trace "22 X 42"		Just Looking ★★ (1999) Ryan Merriman.		
	601	562	41 SLC	X-Weighted (CC)		ET Canada	Whatever	Work Out (CC)		Brat Camp (Part 3 of 4) (CC)		Trading Sp
	520	505	42 DIS	MythBusters (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Crashes That Changed Flying		Crashes That Changed Flying		MythBusters
	522	506	44 HIS	Ice Road Truckers (CC)		Ancient Discoveries (CC)		Underworld Histories (CC)		Life After People (CC)		Beaver
	627	528	45 SPC	(6:00) Copperhead (2008) (CC)		InnerSpace	Stargate SG-1	"Urgo" (CC)	Star Trek: Next Gener.		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)	
	294	650	47 TBS	Family Guy	Family Guy	Lopez Tonight (N)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Lopez Tonight
	619	525	48 TROP	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Outer Limits (CC)		ET Canada	TV Made	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld
	603	561	52 FN	Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Guy's Disney Holiday (CC)		Unwrapped	Unwrapped	In Search of Perfection (CC)		Ace of Cakes
	-	-	53 AMC	(5:00) The Game ★★★ (CC)		In the Line of Fire ★★★ (1993) Clint Eastwood, John Malkovich. (CC)					(:45) All About Eve ★★★★	
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Hot Box	Jon Dore	Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	(6:25) 45 R.P.M. (2008) (CC)		Outlander ★★ (2008) James Caviezel, Ron Perlman. (N)				(:05) My Name Is Bruce (2007, Horror) (CC)		
	581	566	101 MTV	Jersey Shore (N) (CC)		MTV Live	Sex News	Peak Season	After	Jersey Shore (CC)		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	(6:00) The Nativity Story ★★		Charlotte Church		The Nativity Story ★★ (2006, Drama) Keisha Castle-Hughes.				Paid Program
	-	-	106 MUL	Sewing Maid	Kingdom-Wind	Vancouver	Shaktimaan	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Connections	Desi Rhythms	Patrol World

critics'corner

Failure to Launch

There's just so much shame to spread around in this film. Shame on Mom and Dad for letting their 30-something son feed off them. Shame on Sonny for being a moocher. Shame on a woman whose very career revolves around losers. While this might have been a comedy for some, there are too many parents out there who view this as a horror flick or documentary. 5 PM on TBS

Saturday Night Live Christmas 2009

But will they remember to include the Coneheads and the Loopners? This new two-hour yuletide special, culled from holiday-themed sketches over the show's past 35 years, presents the ones judged to deliver the biggest number of ho-ho-hos. Your mileage may vary, but some real gems are sure to make the cut. 8 PM on NBC

Polanski decision in the new year

WILL HE STAY OR WILL HE GO?

Swiss authorities say they will decide early next year whether to extradite director Roman Polanski to the United States.

Justice Ministry spokesman Folco Galli says officials are studying a U.S. extradition request and an argument by Polanski's lawyers against him being handed over to authorities in Los Angeles for having sex in 1977 with a 13-year-old girl.

Galli says Wednesday that a decision will be made early next year.

Polanski was released from a Swiss jail on Dec. 4 and is under house arrest at his Alpine chalet in Switzerland.

He was arrested Sept. 26. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kenya's Style
Kenya Hunt
Read the blog at metronews.ca/kenyasstyle

For complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and tickets, visit:
metronews.ca/movies

A cocktail for everyone
For those who want to try their hand at cocktails this holiday season and beyond, Difford's Encyclopedia of Cocktails, 2600 Recipes (Firefly, hardcover, $45) is a great book to help you learn the basics and master the craft. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Urban Foodie

Top 20 tastes of 2009

ANYA LEVYKH
anya.levykh@gmail.com

For my last column of 2009 (I'll be back on Jan. 7, 2010) I thought I would compile a little list of my favourite tasting experiences from the past year. Despite the small number of restaurant openings this year, there have been many pleasant new discoveries, and both new and established chefs who have exercised their ingenuity to create some truly remarkable culinary experiences. In no particular order, here are my most memorable tastes of 2009.

Grilled neon squid at The Pourhouse.

Gastown's newest addition, The Pourhouse, boasts a simple menu of old-fashioned comfort, but it's its neon squid — served in thick, juicy, scored slabs of steak, and topped with crispy slivers of garlic, fresh green onion and chili threads — that steals the show.

In the West End, Nook Restaurant's chicken liver crostini might be an odd thing to find on an Italian menu, but your Jewish grandmother's pâté never tasted so good. Served on massive slices of toast, and topped with capers and deep-fried onion threads, it's the perfect treat for the soul.

The Italian's answer to beer nuts, Campagnolo's crispy ceci are worth a visit to this north Main spot all on their own. Like the rest of the menu, simplicity speaks volumes.

DB Bistro Moderne is a lively spot, great for cocktails and holiday meetings, but it's chef Stephane Istel who brings the recipes of Daniel Boulud to life, with his simple elegant approach to French bistro fare. The chicken oyster fricassee is a dish I have gone back for again and again.

Breka Bakery on Fraser Street may not be a strictly Jewish establishment, but its cinnamon rugelach is some of the best in the city, and is made from cream cheese dough that turns to butter in the mouth.

The modern Vietnamese fare served at Chau Kitchen & Bar on Robson is clean, comforting and fresh, as is evident in the lemongrass chicken rice paper rolls.

Au Petit Chavignol, the East Hastings brainchild of the folks from Les Amis du Fromage, is big on the charcuterie, so it's no wonder that one of its star dishes is a rillette of duck served with a sweet onion jam.

Irashai Grill may be about contemporary Japanese fare, but the aji sashimi — a Japanese mackerel — is pure, classic sushi heaven.

Maenam's Muslim oxtail soup is a clear, clean, aromatic broth, loaded with julienned vegetables, Vietnamese mint, orange zest and a large dollop of braised oxtail.

Coast Restaurant is known for its fresh and inventive seafood, but it was a sampler from the dessert platter that really blew me away.

On the web
- Read the full article online at metronews.ca/vancouver/columnist/40411.
- Chew more on Anya's blog at metronews.ca/vancouver/blog/136310.

Chef/owner Kris Barnholden is working some major magic in his kitchen at Mis Trucos, and I do mean magic, since he doesn't actually have a hood fan or grill, so induction cooking is where it's at.

You wouldn't think a sandwich could be that memorable, but the Mexican tortas at Las Tortas on Cambie are worth the praise.

In a different part of town, the small, tasty and authentic Mexican street-style tacos at La Taqueria use hand made soft corn shells, local meats, and Ocean Wise seafood.

Who needs a bread basket? No one, says Society Dining Lounge. Instead of starch, guests are greeted with a gargantuan Kobe beef meatball, wrapped in bacon and slathered in tomato "fondue."

La Brasserie's suckling pig with sauerkraut is a tender, fatty, mouthful of crispy-edged pork, but it's the schupfnudel that cause the glands to salivate.

Vista D'oro Farms & Winery has become famous for its artisan preserves. This year's latest offerings include the Turkish fig with D'oro walnut wine — a spread that works especially well over some seared pork belly — as well as the lighter pink grapefruit with champagne.

Peter Fong, owner of Ganache Patisserie in Yaletown, tends to create chocolate on a grand scale, and his bûche au chocolat Yule log is no exception.

There are times for political correctness, and then there are times to eat with gusto. Chef Warren Geraghty of West makes a foie gras terrine layered with goat cheese, apples and quince jelly that is definitely a moment for gusto. You can stop drooling now.

Market by Jean-Georges attracts a certain segment of Vancouver's well-heeled hipsters, but everyone falls in love with the black truffle pizza.

Diva at the Met is known for the elegant cuisine created by chef Dino Renaerts, but one of his best dishes is the DC burger. Braised short ribs, seared foie gras, wild mushroom ragout and truffle aioli make for an experience that doesn't even require fries.

On the web

Global Peasant:
- Travel along with Diane Thompson's culinary adventures in her Global Peasant blog. Visit metronews.ca/globalpeasant for a recipe of Stir Fried Rice-O-Rama.

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Breaking news: Rich celebrities spend loads of money on expensive Christmas gifts

Keith Urban was spotted picking holiday gifts for his wife Nicole Kidman at London's Harvey Nichols department store. He spent time at the By Kilian counter, selecting four perfumes, including the Absinthe Verte, people.com reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Madge lends Guy kids for holidays

THE GRINCH WHO RETURNED CHRISTMAS Guy Ritchie is overjoyed to be spending Christmas Day with his children, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Sherlock Holmes director — who has nine-year-old son Rocco and adopted Malawian son David Banda with singer Madonna — is going all out to make the day "traditional" and special for the youngsters after his ex-wife gave permission for them to spend the day at his home.

A source said: "Guy is really pleased, and cannot quite believe he and Madonna came to such an amicable arrangement. He is a huge fan of Christmas and wants to do everything by the book, very traditionally."

The British filmmaker is so determined to make the day memorable, he has promised to rustle up a delicious roast turkey lunch with all the trimmings and "spoil them rotten."

The source explained to the Daily Mirror newspaper: "This means stockings hanging from under the kids' beds, presents under the tree and a massive turkey, Brussels sprouts, chestnuts, the works.

"When Guy and Madonna were together they didn't really celebrate Christmas Day due to Madonna's staunch Kabbalah beliefs. Now that he's a single man, Guy is determined to spoil them rotten and give the youngsters a Christmas they'll never forget."

METRO WORLD NEWS

Celebrity tweets

Richard Branson is attacking the issues, Lindsay Lohan doesn't like running into her past, the lights are on outside but not on the inside at Jessica Simpson's house, and teenage singer Justin Bieber will not be tied down.

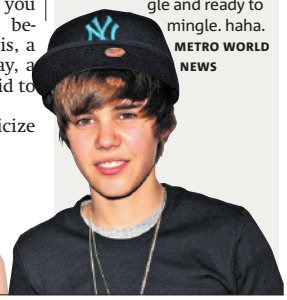
• @richardbranson Good meetings in Copenhagen with mayors of LA, Calgary and Vancouver. Forest talks now. Lots of opportunities for Carbon War Room.

• @lindsaylohan go away ex

• @JessicaSimpson I have so many christmas lights outside that now my inside lights won't stay on! Ha!! Electricians are in and out of my house today.

• @justinbieber the reporter asked me is i was dating. i said i go out on dates. but nothing serious. im still single and ready to mingle. haha.

METRO WORLD NEWS



Lohan gets a legal scolding from LA judge

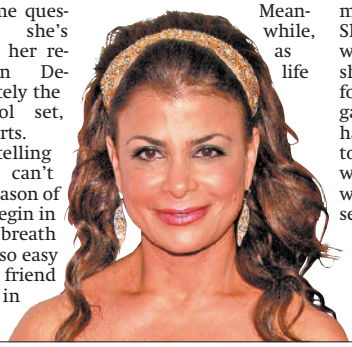
HE HAS THE LOHANS ON SPEED DIAL A judge in Los Angeles is laying down the law with Lindsay Lohan, insisting the troubled actress complete her court-ordered alcohol education classes before the three-year probation from her 2007 DUI conviction expires next July, according to Hollyscoop. Lohan was accused of violating the terms of her probation by only attending 15 of 26 alcohol classes and 13 of 28 self-help sessions.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Paula's Idol regrets

STRAIGHT DOWN To everyone who asked, "Why in the world would Paula Abdul quit American Idol?" a few months ago, it seems that Abdul herself is now pondering the same question. Word is, she's bummed out and her replacement, Ellen DeGeneres, is absolutely the talk of the Idol set, popeater.com reports.

DeGeneres is telling friends that she can't wait for the new season of American Idol to begin in January. "She is a breath of fresh air that is so easy to work with," a friend says. "Everyone in front of the cameras and behind all adore her, particularly 'Mr. Mean,' Simon Cowell, who Ellen has already challanged to a dance-off!"



Meanwhile, as life couldn't be better for DeGeneres, Abdul finally realizes what a mistake it was to quit the show, popeater.com says.

"Paula was full of optimism when she left Idol. She was confident she would get her own talk show and even a gig performing live on the Las Vegas strip — none of which has materialized. It's going to get worse in January when Idol is everywhere with Ellen sitting in her seat," a worried friend of Paula's tell me,"

METRO WORLD NEWS

Kidman shuts down reporter's Scientology probe

HER CONTRACT'S NOT UP YET In an interview with BBC personality Andrew Marr, Nicole Kidman refused to talk about Scientology when asked about the controversial religion.

"One of the thing, you haven't talked about before ... Scientology, it is, a lot of people would say, a bullying cult," Marr said to Kidman.

"I'm here to publicize Nine," Kidman responded.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Was Kate's behaviour behind breakup?

DIAMOND DIVA Kate Hudson's desire for exposure was behind her split from Alex Rodriguez, at least according to one of his friends. "She would always want to be styled before games and she'd insist on front-row seats," the source tells Us Weekly.

"It was a turnoff to have a girlfriend who always wanted to be on camera. Alex wanted someone who was more interested in building a long-term relationship than just building their profile."

The pal also insists that it was Rodriguez who broke things off with Hudson.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Pregnant Coppola plays Bach for baby

MY PARENTS PLAYED CYNDI LAUPER AND NOW I WRITE CELEBRITY BUZZ Director Sofia Coppola and partner Thomas Mars, the frontman for the band Phoenix, are expecting their second child, people.com has confirmed.

In a backstage interview with Chicago's WXRT, the French-born musician, seemingly surprised, nodded affirmatively when asked about partner Coppola being pregnant

Coppola, 38, and Mars have been together for four years, and have a three-year-old daughter, Romy. Coppola was previously married to director Spike Jonze. "I heard the story that if you play Bach, babies in the womb get smarter," Mars said.

METRO WORLD NEWS

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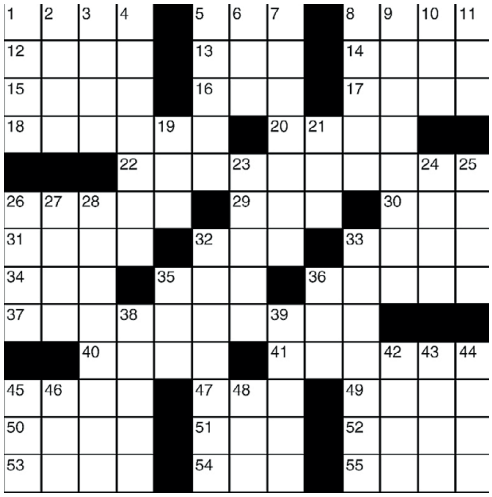
Take Five



ACROSS

1 Cold War weapon, for short
5 Rotating part
8 Undermines
12 Garment of India
13 — Khan
14 Hodgepodge
15 Lendl or Pavlov
16 Rocky peak
17 Island guitars
18 Recipient
20 McGwire rival
22 "Going Rogue" memoirist
26 "Spirit of '76" musician
29 Snitch
30 "— not choose to run"
31 Lummox
32 "You've got mail" co.
33 Dandling site
34 Pac. counterpart
35 Mrs. McKinley
36 "He's — nowhere man"
37 Any of three of this puzzle's answers
40 Jab
41 Top
45 Sketch
47 Singer Cole
49 Waikiki wingding
50 Meditative exercises
51 Accom-plished
52 "— It Roman-tic?"
53 Paradise
54 Commotion
55 "Untouchables" role

DOWN

1 Wife of Osiris
2 Grotto
3 Cereal choice
4 Mental attitude
5 Bring the food
6 In bygone times
7 Sheriff
8 March King
9 High-pH
10 Dessert choice
11 "Help!"
19 Listener
21 Make up your mind
23 Bellowing
24 Concept
25 Yule refrain
26 Envelope part
27 Greek vowel
28 Maximal, as a magazine ad
32 Book supplement
33 Russian citadel
35 Tattooist's supply
36 Rock concert need
38 Hawkeye
39 Surpass
42 English river
43 Without
44 Sounds of disapproval
45 Turn blue?
46 Scepter
48 Answer 11-Down

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	5		6		7		2	
2								6
		4	9		2	7		
	4		5	7	9		8	
	9						1	
	6		4	8	1		7	
		1	7		6	9		
8								3
	2		3		8		4	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

1	4	5	9	6	8	3	7	2
3	7	9	1	2	5	4	6	8
2	6	8	3	7	4	1	9	5
7	9	2	5	4	3	6	8	1
5	8	4	6	1	2	7	3	9
6	3	1	8	9	7	5	2	4
9	2	6	7	5	1	8	4	3
4	5	3	2	8	6	9	1	7
8	1	7	4	3	9	2	5	6

On the web

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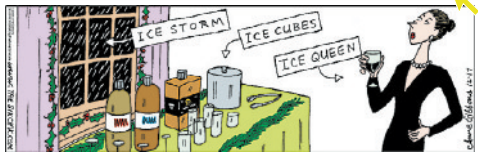

Metro Recipe of the Day

Leek & Mushroom Strudel

Submitted by:
Nicole Paara, Toronto, ON

INGREDIENTS:

2 Tablespoon butter
3 Cup chopped leeks (1 bunch)
500 Gram mixed mushrooms, trimmed and sliced
2 Teaspoon chopped garlic
1/4 Cup whipping cream
1/4 Cup fresh breadcrumbs
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/2 Cup grated manchego or parmesan cheese
1 Package puff pastry, defrosted
8 Ounce goat cheese, crumbled
1 egg yolk
2 Tablespoon whipping cream

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F°.
2. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté for 2 minutes or until beginning to soften.
3. Add mushrooms and garlic and sauté for 4 minutes longer, or until mushrooms are soft.
4. Add cream and cook for 30 seconds or until cream just coats vegetables.
5. Stir in breadcrumbs and grated cheese. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Divide pastry in half and roll out each piece to a 10 x 10-inch square and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
7. Cover half of each square with goat cheese, leaving a 1-inch border around the edges. Top with vegetable mixture.
8. Beat together egg yolk and whipping cream for glaze and brush over pastry edges. Fold pastry over vegetables to cover. Press edges together to seal and brush top with glaze. Slash top of pastry at 2 inch intervals leaving a 2-inch border on each side.
9. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until pastry is golden and filling is hot.

SERVES 6-8
PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 15 MINUTES

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

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ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
A wonderful link from Venus to your ruler Mars urges you to put fun and pleasure before chores and responsibilities.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Forget about cash flow issues and focus on something that brings a smile to your face. It's time to get your life back in perspective

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
You need to be on the move as much as possible today because the more people you meet the more opportunities will come your way

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Others may say you are behaving in an illogical manner but don't let that change the way you go about things today.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
With Mars in your sign aligned with Venus, planet of harmony, you won't have to do anything too energetic today.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
If you admit you need help today you will be overwhelmed by offers of assistance.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Friendship and love are especially well starred at the moment and a new relationship is likely to begin either today or tomorrow.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Go out of your way to be nice to people today, even people who have not always been nice to you in the past.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
Your adventurous spirit will find its perfect outlet today and, even better, you will share the fun with like-minded people.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
The intensity of your emotions will catch you by surprise today — so imagine how other people will feel!

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
You will find it easier than usual to admit that you were at least partly to blame for things that have gone wrong,

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
You may find it hard to make up your mind about something today but maybe that's not such a bad thing.

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